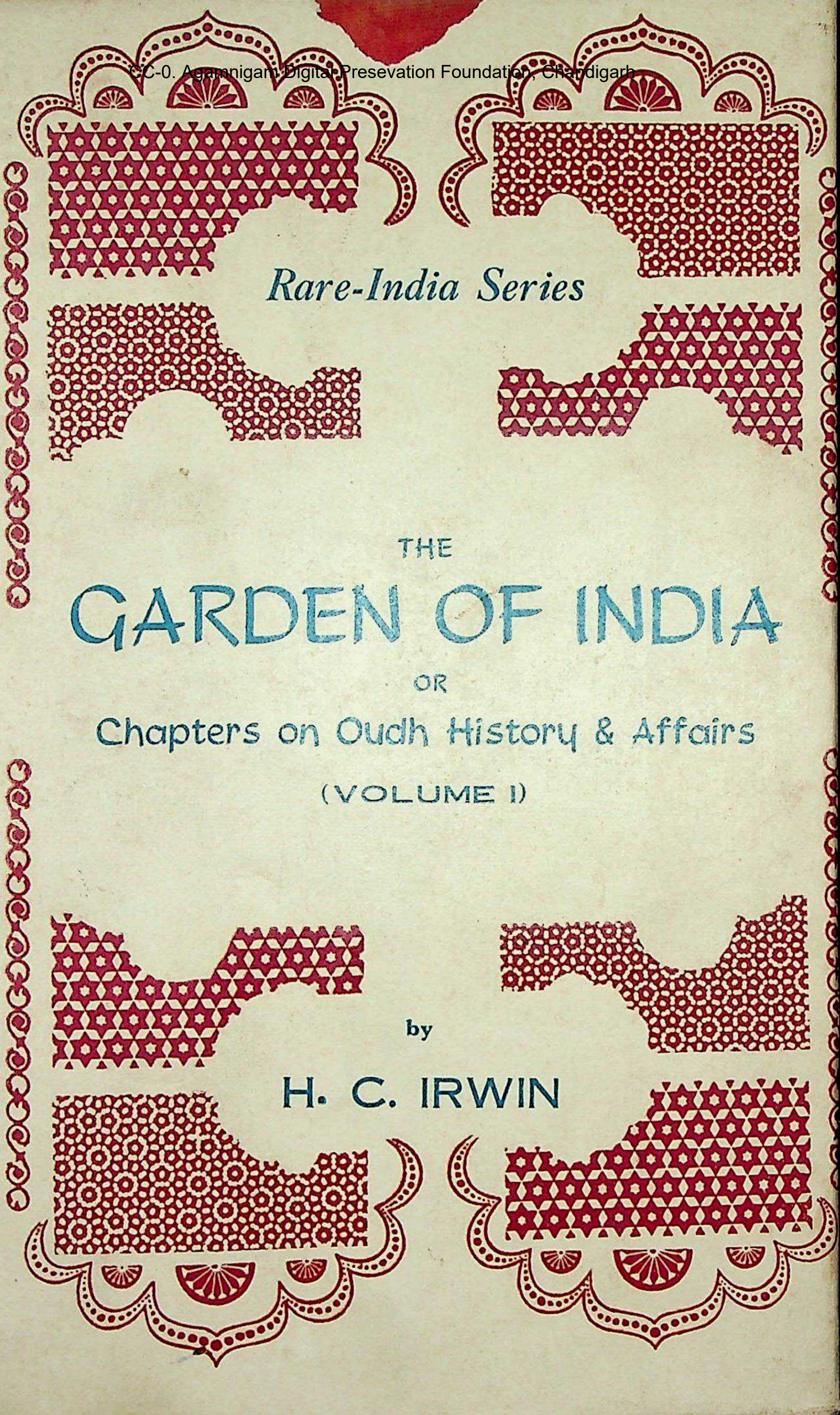

Rare-India Series

THE

GARDEN OF INDIA

OR

Chapters on Oudh History & Affairs

(VOLUME I)

by

H. C. IRWIN

THE

GARDEN OF INDIA

OR

CHAPTERS ON OUDH HISTORY AND AFFAIRS

Volume I

By

H. C. IRWIN

PUSTAK KENDRA
72, HAZRATGANJ, LUCKNOW

State Museum Library
Lucknow

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FOREWORD

Pustak Kendra is bringing out a fresh number of reprints of rare books of historical interest in their 'Rare-India' series. For bibliophiles, teachers and researchers the books already published have been of great interest. It is the earnest hope of the editors that this series will be as useful.

The present book "The Garden of India" by H. C. Irwin, first published by W. H. Allen & Co., London, in 1880 has as its general content chapters on Avadh history and affairs. After giving a bird's-eye view of the social situation obtaining in this region at the time of the writing of the book, the author has dealt with the early history of Avadh, the Nawabi period from 1820-1856, the annexation of the State by the East India Company and lastly the Taluqdari settlement—a unique feature of land settlement exclusively prevailing in Avadh.

The Taluqdari policy of the British Government of India as expounded in October 1858 and as enacted by Act XIX of 1868 has been ruthlessly castigated by the author.* The creation of this class of landlords with special rights and privileges resulting in their "exercise of powers unlimited by any law properly so-called" left open the village communities to unscrupulous aggression. Irwin frankly and pertinently (even for modern times) states that "mere maintenance of order and tranquillity will not suffice for the success of this novel experiment." He further asserts that "the people of India will not be regenerated by mere preservation of the peace, by *laissez-faire* and unrestricted competition." The germ of growth, he adds, "which is to be found so far as the rural masses are concerned, in the capacity of improved agriculture and a higher standard of living, must be preserved from the influence of rack renting and competition, by the perfect security of tenure, of the certainty of enjoyment by the labourer of the fruits of his toil."

The exposure of the evils of the Taluqdari settlement and the conferment of extraordinary rights on a class which helped the British in 1857 is a refreshing departure from the run of the mill English apologists of the British colonial regime. "The Garden of India" is an extremely useful book for the study of the Avadh land system from 1860 to 1880.

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* For chapter on the Taluqdari policy see volume two.

One thing raucously amusing has, however, to be noted. It appears that some men possessed with a sense of humour took Irwin for a ride and introduced the author to a Taluqdar named Ghair Insaf Ali (Non-Just Ali) whose capital was Saazishabad (Conspiracy Town), whose grandfather had earned the sobriquet, Raja Manhus (the inauspicious Raja) and whose chief servitor was respectfully (sic) called Ziada Wasul Khan (the Extortionist Khan). The fun of the whole thing is that Irwin took it all seriously and in his interpretation of the Persian terms has given exactly opposite meanings of the names by which these persons were called, perhaps by their persecuted ryots.

These observations certainly do not detract from the merit of the book whose main theme is the denegration of the land policy of his own Government.

To retain the flavour of the original writing the spellings of names and places are left unchanged.

–EDITORS

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THE
GARDEN OF INDIA

CHAPTER I

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

If the reader were gifted with telescopic powers of vision, and could take his stand at sunrise some bright morning in early April on a certain wind-swept hill-side, almost exactly 82^{0} E. longitude and 23^{0} N latitude, which is very vividly present before my mind's eye at this moment, he would see before him, sloping gently southward to the Ganges, the great plain of Oudh. Behind him would rise in green, tumbled masses the pine-clad hills of Naipal, shutting out the distant glories of the snowy range. At his feet, and stretching far away on either hand to east and west, he would see a broad belt of primaeval forest—the shrunken remnant of that mighty wood, the great Gandharb Ban, which once covered the country north of the Sarju river up to the hills—intersected by a gleaming line where the waters of the Rapti glisten brightly in the morning sunlight. Here only in Oudh may still be tasted, though in diminished measure, the indescribable charm, which no one who has once known it can ever forget, of the wild, free, irresponsible life of the forest.

Life has not many better things to offer in the way of purely natural pleasure than it bestows on a hard-working Anglo-Indian who, having fairly earned a month of holiday by eleven months of honest toil in court-house or in tent, can resort to these happy hunting-grounds, and abandon himself for a season to the bliss of an existence such as Browning has sung of in "Saul" :—

> *"Oh, the wild joys of living ! the leaping from rock up to rock,*
> *The strong rending of boughs from the fir tree, the cool silver shock*
> *Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,*
> *And the sultriness showing the* [*tiger*] *is couched in his lair."*

Think of the awakening in the early twilight from such slumber as only a couch in the forest, after a long day in the howdah, can afford, to see the morning star growing pale in the green sky before the gathering flush of the dawn, and to taste in anticipation the coming bliss of a long, objective, irresponsible day! Think, next, of the exquisite plunge into the blue dancing ripples of the river, as it comes racing down from the hills over tree trunk and boulder! Hard to believe that it is the same stream whose steady murmur lulled us to sleep overnight, as we lay with half-closed eyes watching it shimmering past in the starlight. Strike out boldly, and lend yourself without fear to the cool fresh embrace of its mimic waves. No dread of crocodiles here to mar your rapture as you

"Try the water with delighted limbs."

Lower down the stream the elephants are enjoying to the uttermost their morning bath, lying stretched out in uncouth *abandon*, and uttering subdued grunts and squeals of delight, while their mahouts clamber about their huge persons, and scrub their rugged hides. Then come the saunter through the camp, the inspection of the horses, and the *alfresco* breakfast, followed by the arrival of the wise old *shikari* who went out overnight, and has now returned with sure *khabar* of a tiger's whereabouts. Then the long slow march of elephants in line, winding their way to the distant cover, through deep forest glades where the spotted deer scurry away unscathed by random bullet, skirting noble streams wooded to the water's edge, crossing rugged ravines and sandy nullahs, over broad grassy plains with no sign of human presence save, at wide intervals, the gipsy camp, or the frail hut of the catechu gatherer, or the wandering herdsman with his buffaloes.

And when the great swamp is reached, and the beat has begun, and every howdah is swaying to and fro like a ship at sea, as the labouring elephant ploughs his oozy way through the tall crackling reeds, in whose cool wet depths the jungle king lies dreaming of that succulent young heifer, the remains of whose tell-tale carcase are still lying not three hundred yards off—why, then, you must indeed be *blase* if your heart does not beat quickly and your blood tingle as you grasp your favourite old smooth-bore and lean forward, eager to catch the first glimpse of the black and tawny stripes. And when the mighty game is afoot, and the low wooded hills all round echo to the quick peals of volleying thunder, the smoke of which hangs heavily among the reed-tops, and after a mad charge among the elephants that scatters half of them to right and left like rabbits, the great cat sinks with a sullen roar, never to rise again, and when—but, ah, well ! We must not linger too long over the pleasant memories of this "simple and violent" life, for it is with far other scenes, for the most part, and with other modes of being, that we have to deal in the pages that are to come. So let us transfer ourselves back to our perch on the breezy hill-side, and look forth again, resolutely dismissing all thought of the forest and its charms, or retaining them only as a cool green background to the dusty, quivering heat and stress of the great panorama beyond.

There it lies, the great plain ! with its dim myriad memories dating back from before the earliest dawn of history, ancient home of strange long-forgotten dynasties of aboriginal husbandmen, or Scythian nomands "ranging trackless fields", who here lived out their rude anarchic lives for many a slow far-off century, before the inroads of the Rajput hordes from the north and west, followed hard by the pursuing armies of Islam, crushed their weeker organisations, and made them bondsmen and herdsmen and hewers of wood and drawers or water, unto this day. There it lies, the great plain ! a land of narrow fields and wide rivers, of open barren tracts, and great single trees, and dense mango groves, of jungle patches, and shallow reedy lakes, and dry water-courses, and rugged ravines worn by the rushing rain-torrents.

And what sort of life is it, you may ask, that is led by the scantily clad, dusky dwellers in those groups of mud-built, thatch-roofed, creeper-covered houses that dot the country so thickly—the men who are irrigating their fields from tank and channel, the children herding cattle on the bare-looking grazing-grounds, the women with their water vessels clustering round the village well ? And it must, I fear, be answered that there is, for the most part, a dim, slowly moving, too often a poverty-stricken and hunger-bitten life, a life of small observances and petty superstitions, a narrow round of struggle with the rent-collector and the village usurer, enlivened only by the rare excitement of a marriage-feast, or a pilgrimage to some quasi-religious fair. They are a much-enduring, little-complaining race, these earth-tillers, "men to much misery and hardship born," who, blessed indeed in that they expect little, yet even of that litte too often disappointed, wear away their lives from hand to mouth and year to year,

"Muttering across the barley bread
In daily toil and drearihead."

This is not a pleasant sketch of the condition of the rural masses of Oudh, but I do not think that it is, so far as it goes, an unfaithful one, or drawn in too sombre colours. "Tales of rustic happiness," as Coleridge has told us, are too often but

"Pernicious tales, insidious strains,
That steel the rich man's breast,
And mock the lot unblest,
The sordid vices and the abject pains,
That evermore must be
The doom of ignorance and penury."

That, however, the poorer, *i.e.* the great majority of the peasantry are, as a rule, consciously or acutely miserable, may be safely denied; and this is, perhaps, the most consolatory reflection which a study of their condition can suggest. They are fortified against suffering by the most effective of anaesthetics, that of never having known anything much better than their present lot. Were it not so, however, were they really as wretched as they apparently *ought* to be, the day of their deliverance might, perhaps, be more nearly at hand than it is. For it is a truth of very wide application that the main agent in the world's working is pain. In the history of every people, it has been said, there is a stage of transition between barbarism and civilisation, which always seems more bleakly miserable than either. This stage has not yet been fully entered on by the mass of the Oudh peasantry.

These masses, however, are by no means the whole of the rural population. In spite of their preponderating numbers, they are what in England would be called a *residuum*. There still exists in Oudh a peasant aristocracy, a class of yeomen, consisting of high-caste Hindus with a sprinkling of Musalmans, many of the latter being converts from Hinduism, and retaining most of the characteristics of their ancient faith. These are further removed, as a rule, from actual want of food and clothing than the ordinary low-caste cultivators, and far less bovine and unconscious of their condition, far more keenly alive to its disadvantages, and less inclined to accept the situation as it is, capable of higher pleasures, and exposed to keener pains. With their fine physique, and still retaining much of their old high and turbulent spirit, passionately clinging to the remnants of their rights in the soil, at ceaseless war with the rent court and the rent-collector, these are the men to whom the task of administration owes much of its difficulty, and still more, perhaps, of its interest. If they are hard to govern, they are worth governing. And it may, perhaps, be not unfairly said that the interest which they have for us is their own, but that the difficulties which we find in governing them are mainly of our creation. For we have here no ardent aspirations for national independence, no enthusiastic hostility to contend against. The Oudh yeoman can hardly be said to have a political consciousness. What he does beyond all question care for, what he is often ready to give his own life, or take the lives of others, in order to retain, is his land, or the land which once was his. *Coeteris paribus*—a large assumption—he would, as an individual, doubtless prefer to be ruled by a government of his own race and creed. But the effective force of his preference is so slight, and his power of combination with any larger number of his fellows than are to be found in the immediate neighbourhood of his own village so small, that no government which secured him in the undisturbed possession of his fields at a light rent, and in most other respects left him to himself, would have anything whatever to fear from him.

His desires can hardly be called immoderate. They include a mud-walled house, roofed with tiles or thatch, such as might be built for Rs. 50 or 60; a couple of pounds of flour daily, with a modicum of oil and spices, for his own consumption, and for his wife and children in proportion, say 8 lbs. for an average household; a moderate wardrobe for himself and his family, of which the prime cost might be from Rs. 40 to 50; half-a-dozen brass waterpots and cooking dishes; two or three yoke of bullocks, worth from Rs. 20 to 50 a yoke; a milch buffalo, a few rude agricultural implements, a ploughman whom he feeds and clothes at a cost of Rs. 18 or 20 a year, and who is often a hereditary serf, and, perhaps, an ambling cow-hocked pony which would be dear at Rs. 10—such or something not very unlike it, is his notion of comfort. He wants, in fact, a stock of possessions worth from Rs. 300 to 400, and an income, after his rent is paid, of from Rs. 150 to 200 a year. An Oudh yeoman thus endowed would be considered well-to-do, or, as he himself would phrase it, *khush*. In addition to this, custom demands that he should be able to spend something like a year's income on the marriage of each of his daughters, a feat which he rarely accomplishes without getting into debt. This is, no doubt, reprehensible, but considering that it is the only extravagance of his life, and that it is enforced by a rigorous *dastur*, of the stringency of which it is difficult for a non-Asiatic mind to form an adequate conception, it may perhaps be forgiven him. Let the opinion of the Dakkhan Riots Commission be noted to the effect that "undue prominence has been given to the expenditure on marriage and other festivals as a cause of the ryot's indebtedness. The expenditure on such occasions may undoubtedly be called extravagant when compared with the ryot's means; but the occasions occur seldom. and probably in a course of years the total sum spent in this way by any ryot is not larger than a man in his position is justified in spending on social and domestic pleasures". This remark is as applicable to the north as it is to the south of the Jamna. Moreover, it should be remembered, though it is commonly forgotten, that the greater part of this outlay is not wasted, but consists of an actual transfer of hard cash, or cattle, or household furniture from the father of the bride to the father of the bridegroom, or *vice versa*, according to the relative position of the parties. It is regarded as an investment for the benefit of the boy or girl, as the case may be, and differs but little in principle from the dowry and marriage settlements which are not absolutely unknown in lands further west. Altogether, the Oudh yeoman's scheme of expenditure, his standard of living. can scarcely be deemed extravagantly luxurious or in urgent need of reduction. What he requires to realise it is the undisturbed possession of, say, 25 to 30 acres of average land, at a rent varying according to the circumstances of the locality, from Rs. 2 to 3 an acre. Considering that agricultural produce is generally more than twice as cheap, the out-turn per acre seldom half as large, and the rate of interest from three to six times as high as in England, can this be called an immoderate demand?

Thus far concerning the Oudh cultivator and the Oudh yeoman. But a much more august personage, far more widely known to fame, remains to be delineated. Need it be said that that personage is the Oudh Taluqdar? The Taluqdari body forms the most prominent, though not, of course, the most intrinsically important feature of the agricultural system of Oudh. It may be roughly divided into three classes.

1. **Feudal Chiefs**—These are almost entirely Rajputs—some few of whom have been converted to Islam—and are either heads

of clans, entitled to be called Raja, or descended from leaders of offshoots of clans, and known by the honorific appellations of Babu, Bhya, or Thakur. These had all undeniable rights in the soil at the time of annexation in 1856, which must have been recognised by any Government, whatever its speculative opinions as to the ideally best form of land tenure, so long as it admitted the existence of private property in the land at all. For all the feudal chiefs possessed a greater or smaller number of villages or portions of villages, in which their rights of ownership were undisputed. These formed the nucleus round which they had in troubled times accumulated—sometimes by force, sometimes by collusion with the officials of the native government, sometimes by purchase, sometimes by *bona fide* agreement with the zamindars,—a number of other and previously independent villages. It was over these latter, principally, that the land war raged so long and so fiercely in our settlement courts. But of this hereafter. Ancestral lands, it may be here observed, are commonly known as *bapans*; purchased land as *molans*; and land acquired by force or fraud as *dabans*. The latter term is nearly, if not quite, as common as the two former, though it has not, like them, found its way into Mr. Carnegy's latest publication; perhaps because it was not considered sufficiently "technical" to be recognised in a "kachahri".

2. **"Mushroom" Taluqdars.**—These were generally either officials of the King of Oudh's Government, who made use of their uncertain but, while it lasted, practically unrestrained power to get together an estate for themselves; or capitalists, who acquired village after village by giving security for the embarrassed proprietors. When the latter failed to discharge the revenue demand, their lands were made over by the Nazim or Chakladar to the sureties. A footing once gained in this way was very often maintained for many years previous to annexation, so that the application of our twelve years' law of limitation barred the claim of the original zamindars. Taluqdars of this class are generally either Musalmans or Kayasthas. But the largest and most conspicuous specimen of a "Mushroom" estate is at present in, or on, the hands of a Deputy Commissioner as manager on behalf of a Brahman proprietor.

3. **Loyal Grantees, or Khairkhwahs; literally, well-wishers.**—These are mainly Panjabis, who were given estates in reward for

their services during the Mutiny. They are sometimes profanely styled "Carpet-baggers," and though not unfrequently good landlords, as Indian notions of a good landlord go, are still generally regarded by the people somewhat in the light in which American Southerners regard the Northern leeches who prey upon them, or as Irish peasants regard an English capitalist who manages his estate without much reference to Irish ideas. The grantees, however, as being mainly an exotic and not very numerous class, and being almost confined to two districts, Rae Bareli and Bahraich, need not here be discussed at any length.

Even this brief sketch suffices to show that the Taluqdars are by no means a homogeneous body, and that they differ widely in race, birth, religion, and habits. There is, indeed, perhaps only one point common to them all without exception. They are all, as Hamlet puts it, "spacious in the possession of dirt," a peculiarity which they share with every other body of large landlords known to history. There is still, moreover, an undeniable difference, speaking generally, in the attitude of the people towards these three different classes. Yet these differences should not, I think, be recognised in any steps that may hereafter be taken towards modifying the system and its working. The practical ground for this opinion is that the differences themselves are yearly decreasing. Feudal sentiment, if nowhere actually dead, is certainly on the wane; and it seems highly probable that in no very long time the relations between each Taluqdar and the under-proprietors and tenants on his estate will depend almost entirely on the mode, beneficent or otherwise, in which he employs the great power over them which his position necessarily gives him, and not to any appreciable extent on the mode by which he attained that position, whether as the descendant of a long line of chieftains, or as the son or grandson of a lucky revenue farmer or speculative capitalist.

From an abstract point of view, again, the relation of all Taluqdars alike to the British Government and their claims upon it are based solely and simply on their *sannads*, and on our acts and proclamations since the Mutiny, which abrogate any distinctions between them that previously existed, except such as are specially recognised by us in the *sannads* themselves or otherwise. We owe them all alike a faithful observance of our promises, so long as they observe their engagements, and we owe none of them a jot or tittle more than this. None of the existing Taluqdars can well be said to have received less at our hands than he was entitled to, and if some have obtained more, that is no reason for now yielding anything more to those, if any such there be, who have received only what was their due. If I dwell on this point with what may seem needless prolixity, it is because there has been noticeable in some quarters a tendency to insist on the gulf that separates the "Chieftain" from the mere Taluqdar—(which is no doubt true and interesting as a historical fact)—without stating the supplementary fact that the distinction is one on which no practical action can now be advantageously taken. It is a sorrowful admission to have to make, that we have fallen into an irretrievable blunder, and have by our own act cut ourselves off from all hope of ever settling the land question of Oudh in an ideally satisfactory manner. But the done thing cannot be undone, and it only behoves us to accept as loyally and solve as wisely as we may the problem on the condition under which it has been handed down to us.

Now, however, before venturing any further into the mazy imbroglio of Oudh land controversy, let us try to form something like a concrete conception of the Oudh Taluqdar as he is in the flesh and outside the Blue Books. Come with me, and let me introduce you to my friend Babu Sidha Singh of Sarawanpur, chief of a cadet but long separately established branch of the great Bais clan. His ancestors emigrated northwards from Baiswara some four or five centuries ago, drove out the Bhars, or whoever the aborigines were, and mastered the country about Sarawanpur, which was then chiefly forest, with occasional patches of cultivation, but is now mostly under the plough, with insignificant strips of jungle interspersed. There is his house, that irregular, nondescript building, partly tile-roofed, partly thatched, surrounded by a high fence of thick bamboos, and with a weedy uneven approach, leading to a lofty square-topped gateway, the rough wooden doors of which are studded with iron nails, and are surmounted by a rude painting of a very scaly fish on each side. The fishes are the arms of the Muhammadan kingdom of Oudh, and correspond to our lion and unicorn. Our approach has been already announced to the master of the house, who hastens out to greet us, and escorts us into a good-sized courtyard. We take our seats in a verandah on the proferred cane stools, while our host sits down on his *takhta*, or large square wooden bench, and talks in his broad Doric patois of the crops, the new road that is being made from Sarawanpur to the head-quarters of the district at Banaoganj, the ravages of the wild pigs and *nilgai* in the neighbourhood, and other kindred topics, much as an English farmer would talk under similar circumstances. Meanwhile his servants, and a few neighbouring zamindars who had been smoking a morning hookah with him when we arrived, stand or sit around us, and contribute an occasional remark to the conversation.

He is still a fine-looking man, the Babu, with his tall, well-set, stalwart frame, somewhat inclining to corpulence though it be, and his keen yet sturdy Aryan face, close shaven except for a large white moustache. Five and twenty years ago, in the stirring lawless times when every man's hands had to keep his head unbroken as best they might, he was a bold rider and a keen swordsman, and could drive his own elephant as well as any man on this side of the Ganges. Then, too, he was adored by his clansmen, a body of four or five hundred sturdy Rajputs, living here and there in the surrounding villages, who always rallied round him as their connecting link when there was a Nazim to be passively, or a detachment of the king's troops to be actively resisted; and accepted as a not wholly unbeneficent law of nature by the low-caste cultivators in his own special group of some thirty or forty villages. Of these latter he was the undisputed proprietor, though the same tenants went on paying the same rents for the same land from generation to generation. With the internal affairs of the forty or fifty other villages held by his clansmen he had, in an ordinary way, little or nothing to do. They generally paid their revenue through him, and presented him with a yearly offering in cash and kind, varying according to the size of their village, in token of his lordship. In short, he was generally accepted by his clansmen as their *primus inter pares*, and by his tenants as their earthly providence, and all things worked smoothly enough, so long as the Government officials allowed them to do so. Things, however, have changed a good deal since then. But little real alteration was made in the *status quo* by the summary settlement which followed immediately on annexation. Sidha Singh retained his own undisputed villages, and those of his clansmen were settled with them directly. He grumbled somewhat at this arrangement, but his harvest offerings were spontaneously continued to him by the now independent zamindars, and things were finding their level when the Mutiny broke out. Our friend the Babu took no very active share in the disturbances which followed. He stayed at home, for the most part, and awaited the course of events. He would have done more wisely had he diligently searched the highways and hedges if haply he might find a fugitive Englishman to whom to give shelter and solace. It would have been the best investment of hospitality he ever made in his life, as not a few Taluqdars are now in a position to testify. Not being far-sighted enough for this, however, he sat still, except when he indulged in the prosecution of a long-standing feud, which had been temporarily checked by annexation, with neighbouring Raja of Sazishabad. He went into Lucknow in obedience to the proclamation of amnesty, and under the new policy of Lord Canning, who was "in the giving vein" that day, was recognised as proprietor of the whole eighty villages which now constitute the Sarawanpur taluqa, instead of some five and thirty only, as before. Of his clansmen, some have retained proprietary possession of their *sir* lands only, *i. e.* of the fields cultivated with their own ploughs, subject to payment of a rent fixed for a term of thirty years by the settlement courts. Others, more fortunate, have been decreed what is called a subsettlement of their villages, which means that they retain the management of the whole village in their own hands, but have to pay to the Taluqdar, in addition to a considerably enhanced Government revenue, a percentage from 10 to 25 per cent. on that revenue, as his share of the profits, instead of their former nominal offerings. To this they markedly object; and as he, not unnaturally, insists on payment, and has even in some instances had resort to the rent courts to enforce it, a considerable coolness has arisen between him and many members of his brotherhood. Even where there has as yet been no actual breach, the relations between them are what diplomatists would call strained. Even the mere tenants are not quite as disposed as formerly to yield implicit obedience; and he, being a somewhat arbitrary old gentleman, with no notion of allowing any opposition to his wishes, is less inclined to a policy of conciliation and *parwarish*. All this may be a step towards a higher stage of civilisation, but its present tendency is undeniably towards increased friction. Unlimited freedom of contract, and unrestrained liberty to do what one wills with one's own, are excellent things, no doubt; especially where there is a certain degree of equality between the contracting parties, and where "one's own" is unencumbered by any rights or claims, legal or moral, of others. In the absence of these conditions, unphilosophic minds are sometimes tempted to question the good results of an unshackled assertion of individuality.

However, we have sat long enough by this time, and are getting near the bottom of our conversational fund. So let us take our leave of the worthy old Babu, and ride on to Sazishabad, the abode of Raja Ghair Insaf Ali Bahadur, whose family has not been so long settled in Oudh as that of our friend Sidha Singh. It is said, indeed, that the grandfather of the present Taluqdar came down from Delhi some time during the first quarter of the present century, and filled a not very exalted office in the household of one of the late kings of Oudh. He soon, however, obtained the favour of royal master, took farming contracts of the land revenue, and was so fervent in business that in the course of a few years he put together the present Sazishabad Ilaqa of some 300 villages. This he succeeded in doing by means so consonant with the feelings and customs of the country as to render himself universally beloved, and even to earn for himself the honourable soubriquet of the "Raja Manhus," which, being interpreted, signifies the auspicious or fortunate Raja, a title which has descended in due course to his grandson, through a father not unworthy either of the founder of the family or of its present representative.

It was owing, indeed, to the abilities of the second member of this noble line, displayed during the Mutiny, that much of its present prosperity is due. While the issues of the struggle were still uncertain, his judicious impartiality of mind enabled him to attain success in the difficult feat of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. This happy flexibility of character earned him golden opinions from both parties, and ultimately led to a considerable increase of his estates. For a short period, it is true, after the capture of Lucknow, he was somewhat under a cloud, and was, indeed, for some little time in imminent danger of being hanged, owing to a mistake, which was fortunately rectified ere it was too late, on the part of Lord Clyde. His merits, however, were soon recognised; he was restored to liberty and augmented estates, and was one of the foremost members of that interesting assemblage of the landed aristocracy of Oudh with which Sir Bartle Frere, when he visited Lucknow in November 1861, was so favourably impressed. But his useful life was cut short by his unremitting toil for good of the province, and he was succeeded by his son Ghair Insaf Ali. The latter resides in a large mansion of solid masonry which he has recently erected at great expense, and receives us in a drawing-room furnished in European fashion with lacquered chairs, ormolu clocks, representations of Her Imperial Majesty, and other symptoms of advanced civilisation. Behind his chair stands Ziyada Wusul Khan, formerly a Tahsildar on the estate, but recently promoted for long and faithful services to the important post of confidential manager and adviser to its master, or, as it pleases him to be called, Wazir of the Raj. Ghair Insaf Ali speaks English not unfluently, wears patent leather shoes, offers us champagne and cigars—which, it being early in the day, we decline—discusses the last debate of the British Indian Association, the draft of the Oudh Revenue Bill, and the situation in Turkey, with equal depth and vivacity, and altogether deports himself in a manner becoming an intelligent young native nobleman. It is needless to add that he is a warm admirer of lord Beaconsfield's Eastern policy, but deprecates the amalgamation of Oudh with the North-Western Provinces as likely to be injurious to the interest of his order. He has been sagacious enough to recognise the fact that he lives in a talking and a writing age. Therefore he takes a prominent part in the debates of the *Anjuman-i-Hind*, and judiciously works the *Laluckabad Chronicle*. These are qualities which an appreciative Government is not slow to honour, and its approbation has recently been signalised by the appointment of Ghair Insaf Ali to be an Honorary Assistant Commissioner.

"So our virtues
Lie in the interpretation of the time."

CHAPTER II

A FEW FACTS AND FIGURES

THE districts which since the beginning of the present century have composed the province of Oudh form an irregular pentagon, bounded on four sides by the North-Western Provinces, and on the fifth or northern side by the territory of Naipal, which for about sixty miles, or rather more than a third of the line of contact, towards the east, is conterminous with the first range of the Sewalik hills, but towards the west includes a strip of the Tarai country at their base, varying in width from ten to thirty miles. The area of the province amounts, in round numbers, to 24,000 square miles, of which about 13,000, or, say, 55 per cent., containing 8,400,000 acres, are cultivated. Of the remainder, 5,305 square miles, or 22 per cent., are culturable waste, and it may be said, roughly speaking, that—

Barren waste comprises ...	6	per cent
Groves ...	4	,,
Lakes and rivers ...	6½	,,
Town and village sites ...	2	,,
Roads of all kinds ...	1	,,
Government forests ...	3½	,,

Oudh is for the most part a portion of the great Gangetic plain which slopes gradually down from the north-west to the south-east, and does not differ appreciably in physical characteristics from the surrounding districts of the North-Western Provinces in which it is embedded. It is the *terra media* of Hindustan, where the features of scenery, climate, and national character common to the lands both east and west of it may be found concentred.

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[*] As this chapter is mainly a compilation from official or semi-official literature, I can, of course, claim but little originality for the contents. To obviate the necessity of a wearisomely frequent recourse to inverted commas, I may here note that I am indebted for most of my materials, to the "Oudh Census Report of 1869", by Mr. J.C. Williams; the "Oudh Gazeteer," by Mr. C. W. McMinn; and the "Introduction to the Oudh Gazeteer," by Mr. W. C. Benett, all members of the Bengal Civil Service.

The greater part of the country consists of a wide cultivated tract broken up into tiny, hedgeless fields. divided by low, flat-topped, earthen banks, only a few inches in height, and from one to two feet broad. In rice lands, however, these partitions, or *merhs*, are higher and more substantial, much more copious irrigation being requisite than is needed for any other crop. The monotony of this level surface is relieved by numerous mango groves, occasional barren plains of what is called *usar* soil, on which nothing will grow but a short coarse grass, and frequent *jhils* or swamps, often covered with reeds, and most of which are only entitled to be called lakes during and shortly after the rainy season. Nine-tenths of the country may be described as pretty but monotonous, but the remaining tenth, or the strip of Tarai to the north of the three northern districts of Kheri, Bahraich, and Gonda, which includes nearly all the Government forests, has a character of its own, and can show scenery which for wild beauty it would be hard to surpass in any plain country in the world, set off by a background of precipitous, wooded hills, behind which tower in stainless, unapproachable grandeur the eternal snows of the Himalaya. Population is sparse in this region, and large game comparatively abundant, though much scarcer by all accounts than it was twenty years ago. Tigers may still be found, and wild elephants occasionally heard of. The wild buffalo used to be not uncommon, but is now extinct Sambhar and the barking and four-horned deer are rare; antelope and spotted deer are fairly plentiful; *nilgai* and pigs superabundant, and extremely mischievous to crops. The *gond* or swamp-deer—a noble animal with large branching horns, a species of water-sambhar—and the hog-deer, or *parha*, are to be found among the vast sheets of high grass that cover the low ground along the Girwa and Koriala rivers which, issuing from the hills in a single stream, divide their waters and flow, the former to the east, the latter to the west, until they unite, some thirty miles lower down, to form the mighty river Ghaghra. The principal forest tree is the *sal* (*shorea robusta*), but many other valuable species, such as the *khair* or catechu, the *mahua*, *shisham* or blackwood, and the *abnus* or ebony, are abundant. The catechu tree yields a kind of resin which is collected by a peculiar caste, the Khairahas (a subdivision of the Chais), who live principally in the Gonda district, but migrate northwards about the beginning of January, and return with their spoils towards the end of April. The manufacture of catechu being no longer allowed in Government forests, the Khairahas have mostly transferred their enterprise to those of Naipal. The climate of these northern districts is generally preferred by Europeans to that of southern Oudh, being somewhat cooler. Native officials, however, from other parts regard it as feverish, and especially consider sojourn north of the Ghaghra, which divides Bahraich and Gonda from the rest of the province, as little better than banishment to a penal settlement. The climate of Oudh generally does not differ appreciably from that of the rest of Upper India. Suffice it to say that it is very hot and dry from early in April to the end of June; very hot and moist from July to the middle of October; and bright, clear, and pleasant during the remainder of the year. The general aspects of the scenery have been so well described by Mr. Benett that I cannot refrain from a brief quotation, promising that it is not applicable to the Tarai :—

"The scenery is, as might be expected, entirely devoid of any features of boldness or grandeur; everywhere there are four elements, and four only, to the picture. The sky, covered in the rains with masses of magnificent clouds, in the cold weather a level sheet of uninterrupted blue, and later on brazen and lurid with heat; the lakes, whose still surface reflects the colour above; the groves; and the brilliant expanse of crops. If there is scarcely any beauty of form beyond what grace is lent to small scenes by the grouping of trees and water, the colour at least, when the ripening harvests are seen in an atmosphere whose transparent clearness is saved from glare by a soft and almost imperceptible haze, is beyond all description lovely, and the never absent abundance of the richest foliage gives a sufficient variety to every landscape."

The chief rivers of Oudh are the Ganges, the Gumti, the Ghaghra, and the Rapti. The first separates the province on the south-west from the regulation districts of Farukhabad, Cawnpore, Fattihpur, and Allahabad. It is crossed by a railway and passenger bridge at Cawnpore. The second flows past Lucknow and Sultanpur, and is four times bridged at the former, and once at the latter town. The third, entering at the north-west corner of Bahraich, divides that district from Kheri and Sitapur. It joins the Chauka at Bahramghat, and passing Faizabad city separates the district of that name for some fifty miles of its course from

Basti and Gorakhpur. It is spanned by bridges of boats at Bahramghat and Faizabad in the cold and dry seasons, but in the rains can only be crossed by ferry, a process which usually takes from one to six hours, according to the height of the water and the direction and strength of the wind. In the middle of the rains it is not less than three miles in width from bank to bank. The Rapti, rising among the lower hills of Naipal, at first flows almost due west. It then takes a sudden turn, and issuing from the hills flows south-eastwards through Bahraich and Gonda, after which it enters the North-Western Provinces district of Basti. It is unbridged, and likely to remain so. The aggregate dry-weather discharge of these rivers is 18,800 cubic feet per second. If the smaller streams be added, the entire discharge will amount to 20,000 cubic feet, or half the quantity of the five rivers of the Panjab. This would be a great economic power, were it not that the channels lie on an average from forty to fifty eet below the level of the country. The navigable length of the Oudh rivers amounts to 1,347 miles. They all follow the general slope of the country, from north-west to south-east.

The soil of Oudh may be briefly described as consisting two-thirds of loam or a mixture of clay and sand (which is expressed by its vernacular name of *domat* or *doras*) while of the remaining third, one half is a stiff clay (*matiyar*), and the other a light sand (*bhur*). It is tilled with the most primitive ploughs drawn by small bullocks, and then carefully harrowed, or, more strictly speaking, the clods are crushed by a beam (*sarawan*), on which the driver stands to keep it down, while it is drawn backwards and forwards. The number of ploughings varies from two to twenty, according to the nature of the crop and the industry of the cultivator. The whole process amounts to little more than scratching up and minutely pulverising four or five inches of the surface soil. Attempts have been and are being made to introduce improved ploughs and deeper ploughing. The chief obstacle to their success is the weakness of the ordinary country cattle.

The principal crops are wheat, barley, rice, and maize of all kinds. The two former are *rabi* or spring crops, *i. e.* they are sown in October or early in November, after the rains, and cut in March, or early in April. The two latter are the staples of the *kharif*, or autumn harvest, and are sown from just after the beginning of the rains to the end of July, and cut from about the middle of September to the end of November. Other spring crops are peas, gram (*chana,* Lat. *cicer arietinum*), *gujai* (a mixture of wheat, *gehun*, and barley, or *jau*), tobacco, poppy, and all the garden growths, such as potatoes, carrots, onions, etc. Minor autumn crops are *kodo*, *kakun*, *moth, mash*, and *masur.* The *rabi* harvest depends principally on irrigation; the *kharif* on natural rainfall. Sugar-cane is planted in March and assiduously watered until the rains begin. It is cut in January and February. *Arhar* (*cytisus cajans*) from which the Revalenta Arabica is made, is planted in June, often together with *kodo*, and not cut until the following April. It is very sensitive to frost.

Few subjects are more disputed than the productiveness of the soil, but having neither space nor inclination to enter into the controversy here, I will only state my own belief that the out-turn of wheat on first-rate land, well manured and irrigated, and in a favourable season will very rarely be found to exceed 1,500 lbs., or 25 bushels per acre. The usual land-measure, it may here be noted, is the *bigha.* The standard, or *pakka*, *bigha* is five-eighths of an acre; the village, or *kachcha*, *bigha* varies locally from one-third to two-fifths of the standard *bigha*, but, generally speaking, may be taken as equivalent to one-fifth of an acre. There are similar variations in the dry measures. A standard maund (*man*) contains 40 *sirs*, of 2 lbs. each and a fraction over, but may be regarded as equal to 80 lbs. avoirdupois; while *kachcha* maunds and *sirs* are respectively two-fifths of the standard measures of the same name. Thus, for ordinary calculations it may be assumed that the *kachcha* maund is to the *kachcha bigha*, as the *pakka* maund to the *pakka bigha.*

To return from this digression to the question of out-turn, it must be remembered that a yield of 1,500 lbs. to the acre could only, as a rule, be obtained from the best land and under the most favourable circumstances. And the best land is but a small proportion, less, probably, than one-fourth of the whole; while favourable seasons, of late years at any rate, seem to have been rather the exception than the rule. It is probable, however, that the produce of wheat lands is seldom less than 500 lbs. to the acre, as it is seldom sown in any but good soil, while the poorest and most thriftless classes of cultivators rarely sow it at all, owing to the labour and expense which it requires. The yield of barley, rice, and maize differs but little from that of wheat, but of the inferior crops the out-turn per acre is probably not more than from one-half to two-thirds of it, while in really bad years the cultivator often reaps litte more than enough to recoup him for his seed. Perhaps ten per cent of the total area entered as cultivated lies fallow every year, while one-third bears two harvests, and garden lands lying immediately round the *abadi*, or village site, often yield three. It is extremely difficult to make anything like an accurate estimate of the total average out-turn per acre. Any such attempt can be little more than a guess, and to treat it as a basis for practical measures would be most dangerous. If compelled, however, to hazard an estimate, I should not venture to assume the annual out-turn at more than 800 lbs. per cultivated acre. The cultivated area of the province is usually stated to be 8,400,000 acres. It is now probably nearer 9,000,000 acres, of which 8,000,000 may be taken as the area under food grains, and the remainder allowed for cotton, oil seeds, and other non-edible produce. The yield of 8,000,000 acres at 800 lbs. per acre, would amount to somewhat bewildering total of 6,400.000 lbs., or about 2,857,143 tons.

Now, how would such an out-turn answer to the requirements of the population, which, according to the census of 1869, is somewhat less than eleven millions and a quarter? Excluding from the calculation some 1,220,000, as representing infants in arms and young children who consume but very little grain food, we have ten millions left to be provided for. Let us say that, one with another, men, women, and children, they eat a pound and a half apiece of grain during the day, an estimate which those who know the province will probably consider to be rather over the mark than under. This would give a total daily consumption of 1,500,000 lbs., and annual consumption of 5,475,000,000 lbs., equal to 2,444,196 tons, or 925,000,000 of pounds less than the assumed total yearly out-turn. The surplus of production over consumption would thus amount to a little more than 412,946 tons. The export of grain in 1869 was, according to not very trustworthy trade returns, somewhat less than 178,000 tons, but in subsequent years it seems to have considerably declined, and in 1872 is shown as but little over 50,000 tons. The import of grain, too, in some years, has fallen not verv far short of the export.

A considerable amount of food grain is, of course, consumed by horses and cattle, wasted by damp and insects, and destroyed by fires; but it is impossible to make even an approximate guess at the quantity thus disposed of. Common country cattle and ponies get little or no grain, and live chiefly on grass, chaff, and chopped maize stalks. There is reason to fear that the estimate of a pound and a half of food grain daily per head of population is above the mark. Except in years of more than average plenty, many of the poorer classes, *i. e.*, of the great majority of the people, hardly get a full meal once in three days during the five or six weeks immediately preceding each harvest, and feed, or rather graze, at such seasons on pounded mango stones, *gular* berries, watery squashes, and melons, and other miserable expedients for appeasing hunger, which never find their way into the returns of current prices. The consumption of meat is confined to too limited a class to need consideration here.

For nearly twenty-one years from the date of annexation in February 1856 Oudh was a separate Chief Commissionership, with an administration of the usual non-regulation pattern, the most distinguishing features of which, as opposed to the regulation system, are (1) that the district officers are styled Deputy, Assistant, and Extra-Assistant Commissioners, instead of Magistrates and Collectors, Joint and Assistant Magistrates and Collectors, and Deputy Collectors, respectively; and (2) that executive authority and judicial powers of all kinds, civil, criminal, and rent, are united in their hands, whereas in regulation provinces all civil judicial work is disposed of by a separate staff of Judges and Munsifs. The strong point of the non-regulation system is its comparative cheapness; its defect, if it be one, is its—well, let us call it, roughness. But in January 1877 Oudh was declared amalgamated with the North-Western Provinces, and the functions of Chief Commissioner have since been vested in the Lieutenant-Governor. The revenue divisions are four, each presided over by a Commissioner, who is also a Sessions Judge, and each containing three districts in charge of as many Deputy Commissioners.

The divisions and districts are as follows :—

1. Lucknow division, including	1. Lucknow district
	2. Barabanki ,,
	3. Unnao ,,
2. Rai Bareli ,, ,,	4. Rai Bareli ,,
	5. Sultanpur ,,

3. Faizabad	,,	,,	6. Pratabgarh	,,
			7. Faizabad	,,
			8. Gonda	,,
4. Sitapur	,,	,,	9. Bahraich	,,
			10. Sitapur	,,
			11. Hardui	,,
			12. Kheri	,,

In July 1879 a long-incubated "judicial scheme" was introduced by which all civil judicial work was taken out of the hands of Deputy Commissioners and their staff, and special courts created for its disposal. The total strength of the commission now amounts to forty judicial and sixty-seven executive officers. The judicial staff consists of a Judicial Commissioner, four divisional Judges, twelve district Sub-Judges, twenty-two Munsifs, and one Small Cause Court Judge of Lucknow. The executive branch includes four Commissioners and Sessions Judges, twelve Deputy Commissioners, twenty-four Assistant, and twenty-four Extra-Assistant Commissioners, one City Magistrate of Lucknow, and two Cantonment Magistrates, who are also Small Cause Court Judges. All the Munsifs, several of the Sub-Judges, and one Judge, are natives of India; while on the executive side, all but the great majority of the Extra-Assistants and one Assistant Commissioner are Europeans. Besides the above, there are in Oudh forty-three Tahsildars, each of whom is in charge of a tahsil, or sub-division, of a district, and whose special duty is the collection of the revenue. They all, however, exercise criminal powers, and are competent to try suits under the Rent Act, and carry out all miscellaneous executive orders of the Deputy Commissioner. They are a very hard-worked and capable body of men, whose pay ranges from one hundred and fifty rupees to two hundred rupees a month, while the average area of their jurisdiction is hundred and thirty-four square miles, and the amount of land revenue for the collection of which they are responsible exceeds, on an average, £32,000 yearly. Perhaps one of the most effective directions which administrative reform in Outh could take would be that of increasing the number and salary of Tahsildars. Their present charges are so large that, though it is wonderful how well they do know them, it is almost impossible for them to know them thoroughly.

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The steps in the administrative ladder, then, are the Tahsildar, the Deputy Commissioner, the Commissioner, and the Chief Commissioner, with lateral supports in the shape of Assistants and Extra-Assistants. The Tahsildar has also at his disposal the services of a peshkar or deputy, and of a kanungo for each pargana or sub-division of a tahsil. This latter official keeps up revenue records and registers, and supervises the village accountants, or patwaris, who, with chaukidars, or village watchmen, are the ultimate sources of the voluminous statistics and tabular statements which fill so many pages yearly in provincial reports and Imperial Blue Books.

The aggregate strength of the Oudh police in 1877 was 7,680 officers and men, of whom 5,887 were paid from provincial, and 1,793 from municipal, funds. Their total cost was slightly over £105,000. The proportion of policemen to population was 1 to 1,560, and the cost per head was 2¼d.; while in the North-West Provinces the proportion was as 1 to 1,193, and the cost 2¾d. per head. On the other hand, the chaukidars, or village police, in Oudh were as 1 to 321 of the population, against 1 to 453 in the North-West Provinces, and the cost considerably greater. If the Oudh chaukidars were fewer in number, and regularly paid by Government, their efficieny would probably increase. As it is, they are paid partly by landholders in cash or rent-free grants, generally of inferior land, partly by cultivators in the shape of petty grain dues (*tihai*), in the realisation of which much of their time is apt to be spent; and thus their sense of responsibility to Government is naturally weakened.* The pay is very small, rarely more than Rs. 36 a year, yet, strange as it may seem, there is considerable competition for the post.

The military force of the province is divided between the three cantonments of Lucknow, Faizabad, and Sitapur, and consists of one regiment of European, and two-regiments and one detachment of native, cavalry; five batteries of European artillery; and four regiments of European, and four of native, infantry. Its annual cost is somewhat in excess of £350,000. Orders have recently been issued for the abandonment of Sitapur as a military station.

There are eleven district jails in Oudh, and a central prison at

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*It must be admitted, however, that there are peculiar difficulties in the way of anything like sweeping reform of the chaukidari system of Oudh.

Lucknow. The average daily population of these establishments is about 8,000, and their yearly cost about £30,000 or Rs. 38 per head.

There are more than 1,400 schools of different grades managed by the Educational Departments, with nearly 70,000 pupils, the total cost of whose instruction amounts to more than £50,000. Nearly 5,000 of these study English; Urdu and Hindi are read by about 35,000 and 34,000 respectively; more than 10,000 learn Persian, but Sanskrit and Arabic seem to find few disciples. These latter languages, however, are taught privately by Pandits and Maulavis to pupils of the classes whom our schools do not attract.

The imperial taxes collected within the province amounted in 1877 to somewhat more than £1,670,000, of which somewhat less than £1,400,000 is derived from land revenue,* and from excise and stamp duties about £90,000 each. Other miscellaneous sources, the principal of which were the forests and the post office, yielded some £90,000 more. Disbursements within the province were less than £550,000, adding to which the military charges, or some £350,000, there remains a clear contribution to the resources of the empire of more than three-quarters of a million sterling. And this is exclusive of the income derived from the great opium and salt monopolies which amount on an average to not less than £500,000 and £200,000 respectively. Thus, the total contribution of Oudh to the imperial treasury, after defraying the cost of the garrison and all local charges, is but little short of a million and a half sterling. Even if it be said, as it not unfairly may, that the income derived from opium, forests, and the post office, is not really taxation, and involves no drain on the country, it still remains true that considerably more than £900,000 sterling raised by taxation within the province is expended outside its limits.

"Alles das geht von des Bauern Felle,"

and it is obvious how severe must be the drain of such an outflow on the resources of a poor and overcrowded country. Depletion may be sometimes a salutary process, but if carried too far it is apt to result in death from inanition, and in any case the balance of opinion is not in favour of trying it upon a starving patient.

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*The incidence of the land revenue is nearly Rs. 2 per cultivated acre, which is about one-fifth heavier than in the North-West Provinces, and nearly five times as heavy as in the Central Provinces.

The population of Oudh is, perhaps, more dense than that of any other portion of equal extent of the earth's surface. It amounted at the census of 1869, in round numbers, to eleven millions and a quarter, or 474 to the square mile. During the ten years that have elapsed since then, it can hardly have failed to increase, though to what extent there are no means of knowing. The province, to quote an old Administration Report, is "a little smaller than Scotland, a little larger than Denmark, but with a population more than double that of both put together." It is not uninstructive to compare Oudh in this respect with a few other Indian provinces and European countries :

	Population per Square mile	Date of Census
Oudh	474	1869.
England and Wales	344	1861
Belgium	400	1855
Holland	254	1853
France	178	1856
Saxony	354	1855
Italy	268	
Bengal	269	1872
North-West Provinces	361	1865
Central Provinces	79	1866

These figures suffice to show how much more densely crowded is the soil of Oudh than that of the most populous regions in Europe, or of other parts of India. And if some 4,300 square miles to the north of the province, including the Government forests, be excluded, the population of the remainder, some 19,600 square miles, or 84 per cent of the whole area, is 514 to the mile; while on the cultivated and culturable area alone, or 77 per cent of the whole, it is 550 to the mile.

And in no part of India, moreover, is the proportion of urban to rural population so small. Only 7·1 per cent live in towns of more than 5,000 inhabitants. And of these so-called towns, many might be more correctly described as large, straggling country parishes. There is but one large city, Lucknow, with a population of 284,000, the largest in British India after the three Presidency towns, and the eighth in point of numbers in the British Empire. After Lucknow, *longo sed proximus intervallo*, comes Faizabad, with some

37,000 inhabitants, and then Bahraich, with 20,000. There are 15 other towns with from 10,000 to 20,000 inhabitants, and 39 with from 5,000 to 10,000.

"There is," writes Mr. McMinn, "only one town in Oudh, Tanda, which owes its size and prosperity to manufactures or trade. There are seventeen more with a population above 10,000; of them, three, Lucknow, Faizabad, and Nawabganj, rose from being grassy plains or small villages to the position of cities by being the residence of the Oudh Court. Nine others, Bahraich, Shahabad, Khairabad, Sandila, Radauli, Bilgram, Jais, Sandi, Zaidpur, were Musalman military colonies in the middle of the Hindu population; the remaining five Balrampur, Gonda, Laharpur, Purwa, and Mallawan, were the residences of feudal barons, or of Government revenue officials."

At least 72 per cent. of the people of Oudh are agriculturists, *i. e.* are engaged in the cultivation of land, often conjointly with other occupations. This enormous rural population, excluding the insignificant proportion to be found living in towns and cultivating the surrounding lands, is scattered over some 24,000 villages and 54,000 hamlets, there being, on an average, one village and more than two hamlets to every square mile The total number of clusters of houses in the country is thus nearly 78,000 with an average population of nearly 150 each. "Every rood" in the garden of India has certainly to "maintain its man"; that it *well* maintains him is not, perhaps, so certain.

Out of 2,500,000 houses, less than 20,000 are of brick, and most of these are relics of former Muhammadan prosperity. The enormous majority are mud-built. These are frequently tile-roofed, but the use of thatch is more common, specially in the northern districts where thatching-grass abounds. In the Tarai, whole villages may be found consisting entirely of grass matting. Of course houses built of such materials are terribly obnoxious to fires, both accidental and incendiary, and one of the favourite methods of annoying an unpopular neighbour is to insert a dry piece of lighted cowdung in his roof on a dark night when the wind is blowing freshly. During the summer months, when everything is as dry as tinder, and hot winds prevail, fires are fearfully common, and it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that every thatched house in the country is burnt down once in ten years. The use of tiles would much diminish the risk of conflagrations, but the facilities for obtaining thatching grass, and its cheapness, prevent recourse to the less dangerous but more costly material. Newly founded villages are often shadeless and bare-looking, but those of old foundation are nearly always overshadowed by lofty tamarind, *pipal*, or *banyan* trees. Under one of these, generally in front of the house of the most influential resident of the village, is to be found the *chaupal* or place of meeting, where such political life as the people possess exhibits itself in nightly discussions of their local affairs and transactions. Small bazars are numerous all over the country. They are held once or twice a week, in the shade, generally, of the grove of some good-sized village, where petty traders and agriculturists congregate, and the exceedingly simple wants of the latter are supplied.

Manufactures are at a very low ebb. The three principal industries under native rule were cotton-weaving, salt-making, and spirit-distilling. Of these, the first has been crippled by Manchester competition ; the second has been annihilated, so far as legislation can annihilate it, and the occupation of a numerous caste destroyed ; while the third has been transformed into a department of administration, by the conversion of the private distiller into a paid *employee* of Government. "Formerly," states the Oudh Administration Report for 1876-77, "the weavers of Tanda used to produce the most delicate muslin, but now their looms are seldom used, except in the preparation of the coarsest cloths." Cotton-weavers and salt-makers have certainly no cause to bless our rule, which has taken the bread out of their mouths, indirectly as regards the former, directly and under criminal penalties as regards the latter. The salt manufacture having been crushed, £400,000 worth of salt is imported yearly. The makers of brass water and cooking vessels are perhaps the most flourishing class of artisans, these being among the few articles the use of which is universal. Their prices are determined by ordinary competition ; while the village artisans, the carpenter, the blacksmith, and the leatherworker are paid by customary grain dues, after each harvest. "They are really," to quote Mr. Benett, "integral parts of that complete political system which has for its basis the grain heap on the threshing-floor at the end of the harvest, and take their place more correctly with the raja, the village proprietors, and the tillers of the soil than with the trading classes."

The correctness of the trade returns is open to suspicion, and the value of exports and imports is practically an unknown quantity. It may, however, be regarded as certain that imports are almost always considerably in excess of exports. The province has nothing to export save agricultural produce, timber, *ghi*, hides, and wool. Unless, indeed, we may say that it exports two commodities which do not figure in the returns, viz. land and men. Many of the large landholders' estates are heavily mortgaged to bankers and money-lenders outside the province; and great numbers of Oudh Rajputs and Brahmans are employed as soldiers and peons in Bengal and Central and Southern India, whose home-remittances doubtless cover some portion of the excess of imports over exports. So far as the returns may be trusted, the chief articles of import are cotton (raw or in thread), salt, and English piece-goods, with average annual values of £340,000 for the first, and £400,000 each for the two latter; while exports of edible grains, oil seeds, and sugar aggregate about a million sterling. There seems, on the whole, but too much reason to doubt the truth of the popular opinion concerning the capabilities of Oudh as the granary of India. Grain may, it is true, leave the province in large quantities on an emergency occurring elsewhere, but it can only do so because her own hungry masses have not the means wherewith to retain it when prices rise. In recent years the import of food grains has much increased, and in 1875-76—a year when grain was very cheep in Oudh—fell less than 17,000 tons short of the exports.

The land of Oudh, the cultivation of which affords their only means of subsistence to nearly three-fourths of the people, or some 8,000,000 souls, is owned by about 100,000 proprietors. Its distribution is extremely unequal. There are a few very large proprietors with estates of from 50,000 to 500,000 acres; some 300 who hold from 4,000 to 50,000 acres: 21,000 small zamindars with properties, on an average, of about 150 acres each; and name 78,000 peasant proprietors holding, 3,000,000 acres, or an average of about 38 acres a-piece. Something like two-thirds of the soil is owned by taluqdars, *i. e.* by landholders whose names are entered in a list prepared by the Chief Commissioner under Act I of 1869. A yearly payment of not less than Rs. 5,000 as revenue is understood to be a usual though not an indispensable qualification. There are 272 of these gentlemen, most of whom hold *sannads* or grants from the British Government, conferring on them an indefeasible hereditary and proprietary right in their estates.

The first district to come under the "regular" or thirty years settlement of the land revenue was Pratabgarh in 1862; the last to emerge from the ordeal was Kheri, in 1878. The theory on which it rests is that each village is assessed separately, and that the Government demand amounts to one-half of the gross rental, which again is generally estimated at from two-fifths to one-third of the gross produce. The other half of the gross rental belongs to the proprietor, but out of it he has to defray the expenses of chaukidars and patwaris (the village police and village accountants , calculated at 12 per cent. on the revenue. Local cess and other rates absorb 7 per cent. more, so that his share of the gross rental, assuming it to be double the revenue, amounts to little more than two-fifths. Nor is this by any means all clear profit. Village expenses, including such items as revenue process fees, receipt stamps, stationery for patwari, food of patwari when required to leave his circle, and other miscellaneous charges, will hardly be defrayed under 5 per cent of the gross rental. Cost of management will probably, in a large estate absorb 5 per cent. more. So that even in an estate of which the gross rental is really as well as nominally double the assessment, the proprietor's income is by no means equal to the assessment. An example will put this in a clear light. Suppose the gross rental of a village to be Rs. 200, and its assessment Rs. 100. Then the payments which the zamindar will have to make on account of it will stand as follows :

1.	Revenue ...	Rs. 100 0 0
2.	Chaukidar ...	6 0 0
3.	Patwari ...	6 0 0
4.	Local rates ...	4 8 0
5.	Local cess ...	2 8 0
6.	Village expenses ...	5 0 0
7.	Cost of management ...	5 0 0
	Total	Rs. 129 0 0

He thus derives from his village only Rs. 71 out of a gross rental of Rs. 200. The first five charges are inevitable and the last two have been put at a very low figure. No allowance, moreover, has been made for unrealisable balances of rent, which, especially in bad seasons, are frequent enough. If a Taluqdar, he would have to pay an additional 1 per cent as his subscription to Canning College and the British Indian Association of Taluqdars. It is true, however, that the charges for chaukidars and patwaris are not ordinarily collected with the revenue. Zamindars are left to make their own arrangements with these functionaries, and it is only in the event of failure to satisfy their demands that Collectors are authorised to realise their pay in cash, at a rate not exceeding 6 per cent. on the revenue. Landlords, especially in grain-rented villages, often realise considerably more from cultivators under the heads of pay of patwari and chaukidar, in addition to rent, than they actually disburse.

Again, over a considerable portion of some taluqas, and over some portion of almost all, there exists a double ownership. In some cases, whole villages are subsettled with under-proprietors, who pay their revenue through the Taluqdar, *plus* from 5 to 25 per cent., according to circumstances, of the assumed profits as a rent-charge. They are also liable for all the other charges above enumerated, and the share of profits which accrues to them is small exceedingly. Much more common than subsettlements of entire villages are smaller deductions from the rental in favour of persons who have been decreed the right to hold a certain quantity of land, called *sir* or *nankar* or *daswant*, at a lighter rent than that ordinarily payable.

Estates or villages not included in any taluqa are called *zamindari* or *mufrid mahals,* and are sometimes the property of single individuals, but more frequently of coparcenary communities. In either case, the revenue is paid directly to Government. There are a few—a very few—tenants who have been decreed, under the Oudh Rent Act, a heritable but not a transferable right of occupancy in the whole or a portion of their holdings, at rents less by two annas in the rupee, *i.e.*, by one-eight, than are payable by ordinary tenants of the same class for similar land, and which are liable to enhancement once in five years. And there are a great many—a very great many—tenants at will, the amount of whose rent is entirely a matter of agreement between them and their landlord, and for the determination of which no court in the country has at present any legal authority to interfere. Below these again are a great mass of day-labourers, some of whom cultivate small patches of land, while the rest have no land at all.

We are now in a position to classify "the agricultural interest" of Oudh as follows :—

1. Taluqdars;
2. Zamindars, who hold no *sannads*, and whose property on their death is divided according to the usual law of inheritance;
3. Independent coparcenary communities;
4. Subsettled coparcenary communities;
5. Holders of *sir*, *nankar*, *daswant*, and other minor rights, in subordination to a superior proprietor, generally a Taluqdar;
6. Holders of occupancy rights;
7. Tenants at will—the "will" in question not being, as a rule, so much their own as their landlords';
8. Day-labourers, whose wages, *while they are employed*, range *from a shilling to eighteenpence, or, at most, two shillings a week*, if paid in cash, and from *four to six pounds a day of coarse grain*, if paid in kind.

The condition of Taluqdars varies economically, much as that of landlords in other countries. Some are wealthy and unembarrassed, others quite the reverse. It may be said that, with good management and reasonable economy, they should nearly all be very well-to-do. There are, however, a few exceptions, where assessment has been heavy, and at the same time a large proportion of the profits is intercepted by under-proprietors, and in some such cases as these it must be admitted that the Taluqdar's embarrassments are not due to any fault of his own, save the original sin, which our policy invited, and indeed almost forced him to commit, of claiming the superior proprietorship in a number of villages to which he had, properly speaking, no real right. A number of the most embarrassed of these estates, assessed to an aggregate revenue of £200,000, were in 1871 brought under the management of six Encumbered Estates Courts, under the superintendence of special officers. The special agency was abolished in 1876, and most of the estates are now managed by Deputy Commissioners, in addition to their other duties The experiment cannot be pronounced to have been a distinguished success. All that could be done by the superintendents was done, but the difficulties were in many cases almost insuperable, and are so still. Our rent law is perfectly effectual for recovering rents from ordinary cultivators. But it fails as against high-caste under-proprietors and ex-proprietors, mainly because these men believe themselves to have rights in the soil which our legislation and our courts have either ignored altogether, or have saddled with a rent which they consider unduly heavy, made payable to persons whose right to receive it they in many cases totally deny. No law or system which is in direct conflict with the notions of justice entertained by the people to whom it is intended to apply, will ever work happily or smoothly. The true remedy for the friction, to use a mild term, which now attends the recovery of rents from the high-caste peasantry of Oudh, is not to increase the stringency of the Rent Act, or to disfigure the Statute Book by class legislation, but to remove the actual distress and sense of wrong under which that peasantry suffers. A great step to its removal might even now be taken by allowing, if not compelling, the sale of portions of these huge, disorganised estates, carefully selecting for the purpose those villages in which the antagonism between the Taluqdar and the under-proprietors is most bitter. A right of pre-emption on the part of Government might then be asserted, and direct engagements for the revenue be taken from the under-proprietors. Any sum that might be required could easily be raised at 4 per cent., and the purchase-money might be made repayable by instalments spread over a period of twenty years, with interest at 6 per cent. The zamindars, thus made once more independent, would eagerly embrace such an offer, and the hypothecation of the village to Government would afford ample security for the recovery of the debt. We might thus "take up this mangled matter at the best," and make a long step towards reducing some of these overgrown estates to something like the dimensions to which they should originally have been confined, viz. the ancestral villages which form the nucleus of each taluqa, and to proprietary right in which no one but the Taluqdar has, or asserts, any claim. We might thus hope to see something like the end of the present hideous imbroglio of conflicting interests in the soil, though where, as in some "mushroom" estates, there is no such nucleus, the evil would, of course, be only diminished.

Single zamindars generally are, and always ought to be, well-to-do and comfortable. Their estates are not too large for them to manage themselves, without the intervention of agents, or *karindas*, and they have, as a rule, very few sub-proprietors to intercept a portion of the profits. If they are in difficulties, these may fairly be ascribed to their own carelessness or bad management.

Independent coparcenary bodies are generally so numerous that each individual has but a small share of the profits. Their tenures are sometimes extremely complicated; one man may have an undivided share in half-a-dozen villages. Their condition is a function of several variables, such as their numbers, the severity or lightness of the assessment, the terms, good or bad, on which they live among each other, the honesty and competence of the *lambardar*, or headman, of their *patti*, or share, and their readiness to stick to him and follow his lead. The same remarks apply to subsettled coparcenaries, except that their position is worse by their loss of independence of the Taluqdar, and by their enjoying only a portion of the profits instead of the whole. It may be said generally that they are a good deal more poverty-stricken and discontented than independent communities.

Holders of *sir*, *nankar*, and other minor rights are in a less difficult, if less dignified, position than those who have obtained the subsettlement of entire villages. Their standard of comfort is about the same, but the dangerous power which they possess of mortgaging their lands, and so raising money without immediate loss of possession, has brought many of them to ruin and heavily involved many more.

Holders of occupancy rights are so few that their position need hardly be discussed; indeed, but for considerations of symmetry, they might almost have been left out of the classification altogether.

Of the great mass of tenants at will—seven millions or more including their wives and families—it seems almost enough to say that they are tenants at will, and that in eight out of the twelve districts of Oudh the proportion of cultivated acres to adult agricultural males is but as three to each man. Custom is everywhere in these southern districts giving way to competition, and unless something is very soon done to arrest the evil, the tenants will all be mere cottiers. It is too plainly apparent to be any longer doubted, that, with occasional exceptions, the tenure of all ordinary cultivators has already become, or is rapidly becoming, cottier tenure as defined by Mr. Mill at the beginning of Chapter IX of the second book of his Political Economy, *i. e.* a tenure under which "the labourer makes his contract for land without the intervention of a capitalist farmer, and in which the conditions of the contract, and especially the amount of rent, are determined, not by custom, but by competition." It would doubtless be absurd to assert that custom has ceased to exercise any influence on rents. It still keeps, for instance, the rents of some castes lower than those of others. But there is no custom which prevents a landlord, large or small, from endeavouring—and generally succeeding in the endeavour—to raise rents whenever he thinks his tenants will stand another turn of the screw, or from ejecting them if he thinks he can make more by putting in another tenant, or by taking the land into his own cultivation. While this is so, it would be futile to assert that rent is not mainly determined by competition. If there is not always the competition of one tenant againt another, here is always the competition of the landlord, as a potential cultivator, against his tenant. So long as rents are not fixed by either custom or law, it seems idle to hope that the condition of the cultivator will not go on from bad to worse.

And that it is bad now there can be no doubt It is less depressed in the northern districts, where population is less dense, competition less keen, holdings larger, and rents lighter. But the gradual extension of the curse of competition and rack-renting to these hitherto comparatively fortunate regions can only be a question of time. Even now, taking the province as a whole, it is scarcely too much to say that a large proportion of cultivators have neither food sufficient to keep them in health, nor clothes sufficient to protect them from the weather; that their cattle are miserably thin and weak from under-feeding; that they are hardly ever out of debt for twelve months together, though in a good season they can pay off their debt within the year, while in a bad one it accumulates; and that, except in specially favourable seasons, they are dependent on the money-lender for their food for from two to six months in the year.

It may not be out of place here to give a few figures, the result of an inquiry which I once had occasion to make into the condition of ordinary cultivators in the Bahraich district. The 60 families whose circumstances I endeavoured to analyse consisted of 436 persons, of whom 169 were men and 134 women, over twelve years of age, while there were 71 boys and 62 girls under that age. They had 76 ploughs and 173 bullocks, and of cattle of all kinds, including goats, sheep, pigs, and ponies, they had 712. The average area of their holdings was a trifle over 8 acres, or a little more than 6½ acres to each plough, or 1⅐ of an acre per head. Thirty of these cultivating families paid rent in cash, and thirty in kind. Ascertaining as nearly as was practicable the amount of grain-rent paid by the latter during three years, (1283, 1284, and 1285 Fasli, *i. e.* from October 1875 to September 1878), and converting it into cash at the current prices of those years, the result was that rent paid by the whole sixty families aggregated 2,116 rupees, or an average of a little over 35 rupees per family, nearly 28 rupees for each plough, and 4 rupees 3 annas 9 pies per acre. The cost of cultivation was almost 2 rupees 5 annas per acre, or an average of 19 rupees 4 annas for each family. The average amount of produce (probably somewhat, but not very much, below the mark) was 3,748 maunds of 82 lbs. each, or nearly 138 tons, the value of which, at average prices of the three years in question, was 5,352 rupees, or about 1 rupee 7 annas per maund. This allowed an average of 62½ maunds for each family, worth about 89 rupees, and rather less than 50 maunds, worth about 71 rupees, per plough. The average produce per acre was 7 maunds 20 seers, worth, at average prices, 10 rupees 11 annas. The surplus remaining after rent and expenses of cultivation were defrayed, amounted to 2,083 rupees 4 annas, or 34 rupees 11 annas 6 pies for each family, 27 rupees 6 annas 6 pies per plough, and nearly 4 rupees 1 anna per acre. The value of the food consumed by the 436 individuals under examination, at the rate of 20 oz. per head per diem, at average prices, amounted to 4,466 rupees 4 annas, or a fraction over 6 maunds 33 seers, worth 10 rupees 3 annas 9 pies per head per annum. Their expenditure on clothes, salt, and sundries, aggregated 1,308 rupees, or exactly 3 rupees per head per annum. The combined cost of food and general expenditure, being 5,774 rupees 4 annas, was 3,691 rupees in excess of the value of the surplus of grain available after payment of rent and costs of cultivation, or, on an average, 61 rupees 8 annas per household. Only four families could show any surplus, and their total was under 40 rupees. The total amount of indebtedness was 1,620 rupees, of which 1,453 rupees were owed by 18 cash-rent paying cultivators, and 167 rupees by 8 grain payers. The other 34 were not in debt. The average indebtedness was 24 rupees per household. Of the thirty cash payers, only twelve were out of debt, while of the same number of grain payers, only eight were in debt. It may be laid down as a generally true proposition, that indebtedness is far more general and more heavy where cash-rents have been introduced than where grain-rents still prevail. Tenants paying cash-rents are, practically, almost obliged to resort to the money-lender for payment of the demands upon them. In good years, when the harvest is plentiful and ripens early. they may avoid this necessity; but in a series of seasons there are sure to be several not answering to this description, and then a demand for cash payment almost inevitably drives cultivators who have no capital and live from hand to mouth to borrow from a mahajan on the security of their crops. The habit of borrowing, once contracted, establishes itself more and more strongly, and becomes more and more difficult to break through. Originally, in most instances, forced upon them to meet the demand for rent, it soon passes into a habit of borrowing for food, for clothes, for cattle, and every other contingency.

It is time, however, to return from this brief excursus; and to meet the inevitable question—How, then, do these people contrive to live, for if these figures are anything like correct, they ought all to have become bankrupt long ago? The seeming impossibility is to some extent explained by the fact that in nearly every case they eke out the scanty income which they derive from the soil by day-labour, weaving, sale of milk and *ghi*, or other extraneous sources. A further explanation is to be found in the fact that the out-turn is probably too low, being little over 600 lbs. per acre. It should be borne in mind, however, that the years in question were none of them years of specially good harvests, while in one the crops were notoriously deficient; and that, under the comparatively careless cultivation of the northern districts, the produce of the soil is less heavy than in central and southern Oudh. But it is to be feared that the most effectual explanation of all is that the food estimate, low as it is, is pitched too high, and that the Oudh tenantry and their families, men, women, and children together, do not, on an average, consume even so much as 20 oz. of food-grain per diem. Well-fed-looking men are certainly the exception among them rather than the rule, and it is notorious that the able-bodied adult convict nearly always increases in weight after a few months on a jail diet of 24 oz.

The condition of the Oudh cultivators might seem to be life reduced to its lowest terms. But there are hundreds of thousands all over the province compared with whom he, as Lear has it, is "sophisticated"; the landless village labourer is "the thing itself." Everywhere, in every hamlet, there is a residuum of half-clad starvelings who have no cattle and no means of livelihood, save, perhaps, a tiny patch of spade-tilled land, and their labour, remunerated at the rate of 4 lbs. of coarse grain, or of three-halfpence, or, at most, twopence farthing per diem. And even this wretched employment is not procurable all the year round. How, underfed and almost unclothed as they are, they contrive to live through the cold nights of winter, which they often spend in field-watching to keep off thieves, human and other, is a standing marvel. They are quite a distinct class from the coolies whom one sees employed on the roads and other public works, and who earn from threepence to fourpence halfpenny, or sometimes as much as sixpence, a day. The village drudge is seldom fit for hard work on the roads, being generally too weak for efficient spade labour.

The primary classification of the people of Oudh is, of course, as elsewhere in India, into Muhammadans and Hindus. The former may by subdivided into higher castes of Muhammadans, converts from the higher Hindu castes, and lower castes of Muhammadans. The latter also resolve themselves into higher and lower caste Hindus. To these must be added aboriginal tribes who have no distinct place in either the Hindu or the Muhammadan system, and religious sectaries and mendicants, who, though belonging to one or other faith, are above or beyond all caste distinctions.

High caste Musalmans are of four classes, Syads, Mughals, Pathans, and Shaikhs. The Syads, who claim descent from Hasan and Husen, the sons of Ali, the fourth khalif, by Fatima, daughter of the Prophet, number about 50,000, of whom two-fifths are residents of Lucknow, and the rest are to be found in small colonies scattered throughout the province. Mughals number about 27,000, of whom more than half belong to Lucknow. The name originally denoted the Tartar invaders of Persia and India, but has long been applied to naturalised descendants of Persians as well as Turanians, and Mughals are now generally divided into Irani and Turani. The ex-royal family of Oudh are of this race, as also a great many of their former dependants, most of whom now receive pensions from the British Government. Pathans are more than 190,000 in number, being the most numerous Musalman tribe in Oudh, and are distributed pretty generally over the province. They are descended from the Afghan invaders of India and are the only Musalmans properly entitled tot he appellation of Khan, though it is often assumed by others. They claim to be derived from the patriarch Jacob, and their chief subdivisions, according to Herklot, are Yusufzai, or offspring of Joseph, and Lodi, or offspring of Lot. Next to Pathans, the Shaikhs are most numerous. There are about 166,000 of them, of whom a third belong to Lucknow. The name primarily denoted descendants of the first four khalifs, and was afterwards extended to the posterity of all who were converted to the faith during their reigns. It is now often assumed wholesale by all sorts and conditions of new converts to Islam.

The only high-caste Hindus who have embraced Muhammadanism in any considerable number are Rajputs. The motive was almost always the same, viz. the retention of ancestral lands, or the acquisition of fresh ones. Practically, however, such converts, or Khanzadas as they are usually termed, differ only from their unconverted brethern in being circumcised, wearing beards, praying in a mosque instead of in a temple, and calling themselves "Khan" instead of "Singh". Many of them still retain their clan names. Perhaps the most powerful of these converted Rajputs are the Bhale Sultans, or "lords of the spear," who are chiefly to be found in the Sultanpur district. Mr. Patrick Carnegy, late Commissioner of Rai Bareli, in his "Notes on the Races and Tribes inhabiting Oudh," thus describes the process of conversion :—

"The old Hindu houses seem to have deputed one member to become Muhammadan, and shelter their interests when necessary in a Muhammadan Court—just as in the Mutiny very many famillies sent one member to the rebel force and another to the British, to secure their possessions whichever side might win. If you ask a Bais how his kinsmen became Khanzadas, he will probably tell you there was once upon a time a terrible and tyrannical Subahdar (the terror of whose name is such that it escapes his recollection). This ferocious gentleman sent for all your informant's ancestors, and, after shocking oaths by the beard of his prophet, demanded that one of them should forthwith become Musalman, and then, amid the lamentations of the clan, one of the brethren was solemnly circumcised."

The total number of these high-caste converts to Islam is

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between twelve and thirteen thousand. They include fourteen Taluqdars. Instances of a Brahman becoming Musalman are almost unknown; and even Rajput conversions have during the last hundred years been few or none.

Lower classes of Musalmans number about 660,000, and are divided in the Oudh *Census Report* into 35 castes, of which, however, several are extremely small, and 19 contain less than a thousand individuals each. The most numerous are Dhuniyas or cotton-cleaners, Darzis or tailors, Ghosis or milkmen, Julahas or weavers, Kunjras or greengrocers, Kasais or butchers, and Manihars or glass bangle makers. These low-caste Musalmans are, no doubt, descendants of low-caste Hindus who have embraced Islam at any time since the Muhammadan invasions of Oudh, beginning some eight centuries ago. Motives to conversion are obvious enough, such as expulsion from a Hindu brotherhood for breach of its rules, or desire to rise in the social scale, or to gain favour with dominant class. Conviction of the truth of the adopted creed has probably been one of the rarest.

Alien to the true spirit of the Muhammadan faith as are all distinctions between man and man founded upon accidental differences of birth or position, there can be no doubt that these lower classes of Musalmans constitute genuine *castes*, not mere professions. Or, perhaps, trades unions would be a more correct descriptive term for them. They have very little to do with religion, but a great deal to do with social conduct and social ceremonies, in which their members are even more strict and jealous than are Hindus. In these lower castes, writes Mr. McMinn, "Musalman and Hindu traditions unite to work out problems of social organisation. In point of fact, the conquerors borrowed the caste system from the conquered, relieved it from its galling allegiance to the Hindu religion, relaxed slightly the restrictions upon intercourse between the different bodies, and, above all, rendered the system more elastic and durable by providing means of returning to the fold for backsliders who had been tempted to violate their laws. Musalman castes, in short, are trades unions which anyone may enter on payment of a fee in the shape of a good dinner to the brotherhood. Nor are they meddlesome or tyrannical in their treatment of the business relations which may exist between individual members and employers. A tailor may work as many hours as he pleases, or for what wages; if he is maltreated, his union will support him in an appeal to the law. When he marries, it feasts at his expense; when he dies, at his widow's. If he is sick or out of work, the nearest mess of his brethren shares its meal with him. In return for these benefits, the only conditions are that he shall marry within the clan, that he shall not undertake work other than that proper to his trade, nor eat things unlawful"—nor with unlawful persons—"nor dishonour his fraternity by immoral conduct."

Of the inner life and rules of these trades unions, few Englishmen have any exact knowledge, and I cannot claim to be one of the enlightened minority. For the purposes of trades unions they are most effective, for they not only prevent outsiders from taking up the trade they have made their own, but also nearly always prevent those born inside the fraternity from adopting any other. Their marriage law may be described as a system of free love tempered by Panchayats, or caste meetings.

"It seems to be an invariable rule," writes Mr. Williams, "that in those professions which Muhammadans have adopted they form the great majority; and probably they do in time succeed in monopolizing every trade they adopt. By this I do not mean that they drive out the Hindus, for Muhammadans are not generally so industrious as Hindus; but that all the Hindus of any caste, the principal occupation of which has been invaded by Musalmans, eventually become Musalmans. The conversion is rendered easier when it does not involve the abandonment of an hereditary trade, which is the chief barrier opposed to the extension of Muhammadanism and Christianity among the lower classes of Hindus by the system of caste, and when this is not a necessary accompaniment of change of religion, the attractions of comparative freedom from caste rules (?), greater laxity in the choice of food, less subjection to priestly influence, and a certain rise in the social scale, all of which Muhammadanism offers to the new convert, become too great to be resisted."

Speaking generally, it may be said that all Oudh Musalmans are more or less Hinduised, and have imbibed the caste feeling more or less strongly. The strength of this feeling among them varies inversely with elevation in the social scale, and with general intelligence. Most Muhammadan gentlemen, for instance, will not scruple to drink tea or soda-water with an Englishman, and from his cup or glass, though their attendants regard the act as rather a breach of orthodoxy. The Musalmans of Oudh cannot, as a body, be accused of bigotry or intolerance. On the contrary, they are very tender, as a rule, of the prejudices of their Hindu neighbours, who, in their turn, often take part in the Muharram ceremonies, and carry about their *tazias*—or models of the tomb of Hasan and Husen, the procession and burial of which are the chief features of the festival—with as much zest as if to the manner born, which indeed, as a matter of fact, they are. It is common for wealthy Musalman landlords to contribute to the expenses of Hindu festivals, and very rare for them to kill cattle or touch beef. This mutual tolerance and good feeling is one of the pleasantest features in the social aspects of the province, and is no doubt partly owing to British impartiality towards both the creeds. Among Muhammadans themselves, too, there is very little religious dissension, and Sunnis and Shias, who are at such deadly feud in many parts of Asia, including the Panjab and Kashmir, have, in Oudh, always freely intermarried.

The chief peculiarities noticeable in the distribution of the Oudh population according to race and caste are (1) the small number of Musalmans, scarcely one-eleventh of the whole, which is a smaller proportion than prevails in any other part of Upper India; and (2) the great predominance of Brahmans, who number 1,400,000, or nearly one-seventh of the Hindu, and one-eighth of the entire, population. Oudh is, as both these facts, and especially the latter, sufficiently testify, a stronghold of Hinduism, perhaps its most important centre. Nowhere in British India has the spirit of the Hindu system and polity emerged with more freshness and vitality from its long-sustained struggle with the repressive forces of a Musalman dynasty.

Brahmans are considerably more numerous than any other Hindu caste, high or low, being about 12 per cent. of the whole population. They are divided into innumerable divisions and sub-divisions, the principal of which are the Kanaujias—a name derived from the once great Hindu city and kingdom of Kanauj—and the Sarwarias, a corruption of Sarjuparas, meaning an inhabitant of the country beyond the Sarju river, as the Ghaghra is sometimes called. The latter, as their name would lead one to expect, are to be found principally in Gonda and Bahraich, and the former over all the rest of Oudh, though the Rai Bareli and Barabanki districts form a border-land where both tribes are common. Brahmans are to be found in all sorts and conditions of life, from the raja to the beggar.

Their most frequent occupations are as cultivators, priests, soldiers, petty merchants, and pedlars, money-lenders, rent-farmers, and outdoor servants or peons. Only ten of them are Taluqdars, and of these one is a Kashmiri Pandit, and another, a loyal grantee, is a Bengali; none of the ten are of old family. Caste prejudice forbids Brahmans to hold the plough, and their share in the operations of agriculture consists for the most part in watching their ploughmen at work. Their priestly functions do not generally include the temple service of particular deities, for that, to quote Mr. Benett, "is usually left to the religious orders which are above caste, but the direction of the family life of the people down to the smallest acts—from the solemnisation of marriage and performance of funeral rites, to the selection of a favourable day for starting on a journey, or for cutting the ripened corn. No ceremony, no feast, is perfect unless conducted under their auspices, and commencing with their entertainment. The last sciences which survive are those bearing on the daily life of a people, and in the decay of Hindu learning, it is the Brahman only who studies the old languages of the country, to make himself conversant with ceremonial and astrology" Almost every indigent Brahman who can read and write sets up as a Pandit, and ekes out his income thereby. They are a handsome and athletic race, bad cultivators and rent-payers, but good soldiers; and one of the most numerous of their subdivisions gave the generic name of "Pandes" to the mutinous sepoys in 1857. They are held in bad repute by English district officers, being litigious and quarrelsome, and, in our courts, at any rate, guilty of perhaps more shameless mendacity than men of any other caste. They can hardly fail to dislike our rule, which endeavours, though not, perhaps, with very visible success, to diffuse information and ideas which, if generally accepted, could not but prove fatal to their priestly supremacy, while, though careful to avoid causing any needless offence to the prejudices of any caste, it necessarily treats the Brahman, for all judicial and administrative purposes, as on a footing of absolute equality with the Chamar. Still, with all their faults, which are many and grave, the nation owes them much. Though they fought, of course, mainly for their own predominance, yet it has been chiefly their work that the spirit of Hindusim has been maintained through centuries of oppression in the vitality in which we now see it. And though their original function of conducting the worship of the gods has passed into the hands of

Gosayins and Bairagis and other casteless sectaries, whose claims to veneration are based, not on accident of birth, but on austerity of life—the voluntary principle having thus superseded the hereditary—yet the Brahman still receives from the masses a reverence of which no depth of poverty, of crime, or of immorality can deprive him.

Less numerous, but still more important, from some points of view, in modern Hindu life, are the Chhatris or Rajputs, who amount to nearly 663,000, or 5.9 per cent. of the whole population. They are *par excellence* the zamindars or landholders of the province, and are divided into large clans, most of which have a part of the country which is especially their own, but they particularly predominate in the south and east. Their strength, influence, and possessions vary locally in pretty nearly inverse ratio to those of the Muhammadan landholders. The ancient Oudh dynasties and the popular heroes were all of this race, and a Rajput king, acting under the spiritual and moral direction of a Brahman adviser, is the Hindu ideal of government. Their occupations are of more limited range than those of Brahmans, being, indeed, only three in number, viz. agriculture, both as landowners and as mere cultivators; military service in our army and with native princes; and private service, as peons, bailiffs, and personal retainers, with large landlords and bankers. They share the prejudice of Brahmans against holding the plough, and like them are excellent soldiers. There are said to have been sixty thousand Oudh Rajputs and Brahmans, or between two and three, on an average, from every village in the province, in the service of the East India Company.

More than half of the land in the country is in their hands, and they number 155 Taluqdars among their ranks; while 76 of that fortunate body, including the 14 Khanzadas, are Muhammadans. They own, roughly speaking, 14,000 out of 24,000 villages, though they are little more than one-twentieth of the population. With the exception of the Sikhs, they are the finest peasantry in India, and their character is of a type markedly distinct from that of any other caste. Brave, easy-going, large-natured, generous, but with a certain latent ferocity underlying their more attractive qualities, and possessed of a far greater power of cohesion than Brahmans, they are looked up to by the Hindu masses in the secular, as are the latter in the spiritual, sphere. Yet though practically the most influential class of the population, and recognised by the people themselves as their leaders, as is evidenced by their common title of Thakur (the lord, the master), they have perhaps less officially recognised influence, except in their capacity as Taluqdars and large landlords, than any other of the higher castes, and less capacity for adapting themselves to the requirements of English rule. Their habit of intermarrying with the Chhatris of the North-West Provinces, and of Rajputana, gives them the *entree* into a larger world and a more extended circle of interests than is possessed by any other equally numerous class of Hindus. But their present position, as a general rule, is much depressed. The two great fields of employment which were open to them under the kingdom of Oudh—viz. service in our sepoy army outside the province, and as armed retainers of local landowners within it—are now very much narrowed, and tens of thousands, who would formerly have been helping their families with remittances of their savings from abroad, are now driven back for subsistence on the overcrowded soil. The great reduction of the native army since the Mutiny, and the abolition of the Oudh local force, have been serious blows to their prosperity, while the establishment of the reign of law within the province has rendered the services of a large body of retainers no longer needful to the Taluqdars. It may be said that such employment as this could not much increase the real wealth of the country, and that the application to the soil of the additional labour thus released from unproductive employments must cause such an increase. But it must be remembered that though an armed retainer or a soldier is not a directly productive agent, yet their pay was a very distinct and considerable addition to the resources of their stay-at-home brethren, and often more than equivalent to a rent-free holding. The labour, moreover, of a Brahman or Rajput is, as has been said, seldom of a highly productive character, and, in so densely populated and closely cultivated a country as Oudh, can seldom be held an equivalent to the cost of his own support.

Another principal cause of the depressed condition of Rajputs, and, in a minor degree, of Brahmans, is that they have been very generally engaged in litigation in our settlement courts to establish their rights; and, indeed, under our settlement rules, it was almost impossible for them to refrain from such litigation. The settlement officers, under the orders of Government, practically went out into the highways and hedges and compelled them to come in. Whether successful or not in getting decrees for the rights they claimed, they spent large sums, both legally in lawyer's fees and court expenses, and illegally in douceurs to native underlings, in making the attempt.

And while their means have thus been reduced, the revenue demand which they have, when landholders, to meet, has been largely increased. Instances are not uncommon in which the assessment of a coparcenary village has been raised at a stroke by 50 or even 100 per cent. It was hardly to be expected that, in a single year, the habits of the coparceners should undergo so complete a change as would enable them to pay so large and sudden an increase of demand. The revenue may have been unduly light before, but it was too often forgotten that what we have to assess is not only land, but also *men.* It is practically impossible for a village divided and subdivided, with infinite intricacies, among a numerous brotherhood, to pay a demand which might be met without difficulty if the village were in the hands of a single owner. A good deal has been done in the way of revision and reduction of assessments, but these remedial measures, it is to be feared, were in many cases too late.

Again, the relations between under-proprietors and the Taluqdars to whom our policy has kept them in subordination, even when it has not itself placed them there, are, generally speaking, changed for the worse since annexation. Mr. Freeman, quoting Sismondi, remarks that, "when every count baron acted as an independent prince, and claimed the right of private war, among the endless evils of such a state of things there was one countervailing good. The lord could not venture to oppress greatly men whom he expected to follow him to battle. When the days of greater peace and order came, the hand of the lord who was no longer a captain came down far more heavily on subjects who were no longer his soldiers." This is exactly true of Oudh.

Another point worth noting is that the hands of the Rent Courts are bound by a provision of the Rent Act (XIX. of 1868), which prohibits them from taking into consideration circumstances, such as bad seasons, floods, drought, or hail, which may have caused a default in payment of under-proprietary rent, unless a remission of revenue has been allowed by competent authority for the same cause and in the same estate. Now it rests with the Taluqdar to apply for such a remission, and as it is his direct interest to get rid of privileged cultivators and sub-holders, and supplant them with hardworking low-caste tenants-at-will, it may often not be worth his while to apply for a remission of revenue which would put the privileged cultivators *pro tanto* out of his power. The sum of which he and they would thus escape payment may, especially if the cause of default extend over only a limited area, be a trifle to him, though possibly a matter of life and death to them. Still more is it the interest of the Taluqdar to destroy and break down under-proprietary rights in subsettled villages. It would often, therefore, be worth his while to allow arrears to accumulate up to the period of limitation, and then to sell up the under-proprietors. There are, probably, not many Taluqdars who would be guilty of such nefarious conduct,—which, if it could be proved against them, would be a direct breach of the conditions of their *sannads* ; and some, who might have no moral scruples, may have been restrained by impecuniosity. But it has been put on record by high authority in Oudh that some Taluqdars have deliberately allowed the rents of subsettled villages to fall into arrears with a view to ultimately crushing the rights of the under-proprietors. Others, again, have deceitfully induced, or allowed their agents to induce, claimants of such rights to file relinquishments of their claims in the settlement courts, by promises, which have not been fulfilled, of maintaining them in possession of all the privileges they enjoyed. In any case the fact remains that we have left under-proprietors, with a tenure exceedingly difficult to maintain in its integrity, in the hands of men whose ultimate interest it is that they should default. And if, as Mr. Mill has somewhere observed, it is never safe to assume that any body of men will act contrary to their own immediate pecuniary interest, it is almost equally unsafe to assume that out of any body of two or three hundred men, some will not be found to act for their own ultimate pecuniary interest, however injurious that may be to the welfare of others, so long as they can do so without running considerable risk of incurring legal penalties. Altogether, much as has been said and written about the contumacy and recusancy, the *shararat aur nadihandi*, of the under-proprietor, it may be that we have not left ourselves very much right to be virtuously indignant with him if he has sometimes formed the same determination, with regard to the Taluqdar and the Deputy Commissioner, at which Goldsmith's vagabond friend arrived, concerning his stingy master and the latter's still more stingy housekeeper,—"As they determined to starve me between them, I made a pious resolution to prevent their committing murder."

The only other high Hindu castes which are numerically important enough to claim mention here, are Banyas (grain-dealers and money-lenders), who number about 240,000 and Kayaths, or writers, of whom there are nearly 150,000. Somewhat akin in character to both of these are the Khatris, of whom, though they are little over 13,000 in all, eleven are Taluqdars*. Both Banyas and Kayaths are generally considered cowardly castes, and both, as also Khatris, have considerable sedentary ability. The first are, strictly speaking, Vaisyas, the third division of Hindus, according to Manu; but the term Vaisya is almost obsolete, and Banya, though properly the name of a profession, not of a caste, is that by which they are usually known. They can boast of no Taluqdars among their ranks. Kayaths are really Sudras, and their right to be included among the higher castes is rather a vexed question. The claim of their women to be treated as *pardanishin*, *i.e.*, never to show their faces unveiled, was on one occasion referred to a leading Taluqdar as arbitrator, and decided in their favour. The *patwaris* are all but universally Kayaths, and write, as a rule, Hindi or Nagri in some one of its many forms, the most usual of which is that called Kayathi, after the name of this caste. The more educated generally write only Persian, and despise the ruder character. Many of them are in Government service as clerks; others practise as pleaders and law agents. They are excellent penmen, and very quick and shrewd, but have a reputation—not seldom, however, undeserved—for being unscrupulous and corrupt. Kanungos are generally of this caste, which, though not often occupied with agriculture, includes not a few small landowners, and seven Taluqdars. The circumstance which chiefly militates against their claim to belong to the higher castes is that they are very often addicted to drinking.

The lower classes of Hindus, all of whom are Sudras, are divided into 64 castes, many of them very minute. The most important are Ahirs, or cowherds, who number nearly 1,200,000; Chamars, or tanners and labourers, of whom there are more than a million; Kurmis, the cultivators, *par excellence*, of Oudh, with 760,000; Muraos, or gardeners, with over 400,000; and Pasis, who are found all over the province as village watchmen, labourers, pig-keepers, and thieves, and number about 650,000. Lonyas, though but little over 100,000, perhaps deserve mention as the caste which has suffered more than any other by British rule, their profession, the manufacture of salt, having been prohibited, and rendered a penal offence. They are expert with the spade, and many of them have taken to work on the roads. Garariyas, or shepherds, number 230,000, and Koris, or weavers, 360,000.

Of the non-agricultural castes, the chief are Bhujwas or grain-parchers; Barhais, or carpenters; Halwais, or confectioners, some of whom are Musalmans; Kalwars, or distillers; Lohars, or black-smiths; Naos, or barbers; and Telis, or oilmen. Sunars, or goldsmiths, number less than 500,000, but are often wealthy, and have an ill repute as being addicted to receiving stolen goods, especially gold and silver ornaments.

The most hopeful classes of the peasantry are the Kurmis, Muraos, and Kachhis or Kisans, whose aggregate numbers are about 1,180,000. They are hardworking, well-behaved agriculturists, who, with fixity of tenure, might be reasonably expected to rise to a fair degree of comfort. Even in their present defenceless condition, for it is very rare to find them in any position but that of tenants-at-will, they are, as a rule, less badly off than cultivators of any other low caste. Muraos and Kachhis generally cultivate very small holdings with very great industry, and pay very high rents, devoting themselves chiefly to garden produce; while Kurmis usually grow the ordinary staples on larger areas. It is a significant illustration of the divorce in Oudh of landed property from agricultural industry, that of these 1,180,000 only one, a Kurmi, is to be found in the list of Taluqdars. A good many well-to-do Kurmis are found, under the names of Chaudhri or Mahto, in positions corresponding to that of the Mokaddams of Southern India. In taluqdari villages where Rajputs and Brahmans were few or none, Kurmis not unfrequently enjoyed a *quasi*-under-proprietary right, in return for their services as the medium of communication between the landlord and the other tenants. Many of this caste have shown themselves good soldiers.

Next to these, the most well-to-do castes are Ahirs and Garariyas, who, especially in the northern districts, have sometimes considerable wealth in flocks and herds. Ahirs, owing, doubtless, to their wandering, out-door-life, and to their consumption of milk and curds as food, are an erect and stalwart race, and are generally to be recognised by their long silver ear-rings. Many of them are to be met with in charge of vast herds of cattle sent up for pasture to the great grazing-grounds of the Tarai. They are singularly fearless of wild animals, and, when one of their cattle has been attacked by a tiger or leopard, will often rush up to within a few feet of the assailant, and endeavour, sometimes with success, to drive him away by a demonstration with a brandished *lathi* or bamboo club, accompanied by terrific yells.

At the very bottom of the social scale come the Koris and Chamars, who are not recognised as genuine Hindus, and are certainly not of Aryan blood. They are mere village drudges, employed to skin dead cattle, and as ploughmen and day-labourers. A few of them can make the rude shoes which the poorer classes of rustics wear; and some of those who are established in towns are very neat leatherworkers. Koris are also weavers, but anything more hopeless than their position, and that of the common village Chamars, it would not be easy to imagine. Their best—indeed, their only—chance of escaping from a state of serfdom and, in hard times, of semi-starvation, is to obtain service as grooms or grass-cutters, and those who are fortunate enough to do so often show by their smartness and activity that, under better auspices, they are far from incapable of improvement. In the northern districts of Oudh almost every Brahman or Chhatri cultivator has one or more Koris or Chamars bound under what are known as *sanwak* bonds to serve as ploughmen until the loan is paid off. Such bond-slaves must, of course, be kept in food and some kind of clothes, and no interest is charged so long as they go on working. These debts often descend from father to son, and to generations who were, perhaps, unborn when the bond was executed. Naturally, the debtors are apt to abscond, and their high-caste employers spend a good deal of their time in wandering about the country in search of fugitive ploughmen. Usually, the only resource of the runaway is to take refuge with some other employer in the same capacity, and if the latter sees fit to retain him when claimed, custom requires that he should pay his debt. This, of course, he only does on condition that a new bond for the amount so paid be executed in his own favour. The *sanwak* ploughman is thus practically a slave, but with liberty to change his master if he can find someone to buy him.

Outside the pale of Hinduism altogether are such aboriginal tribes as Tharus (who are found only in the Tarai), Bhars, Nats, and Kanjars. The latter are wandering gypsies, thieves, and hunters. These aborigines are happier than Koris or Chamars, in having "escaped", once more to quote Mr. Benett, "being assigned any definite functions in the Hindu caste system."

Religious sectaries and mendicants number more than 130,000, of whom some 57,000 are entered in the census returns as fakirs without distinction of sect, whilet he remainder, or some 73,500, are divided, if a few generic appellations be excluded, into twenty-three or twenty-four classes. These figures include only clerical members of many of the sects which admit of lay followers, who are shown in the returns under their various castes. The principal division of the Hindu sects in Oudh, as in other parts of Upper India, is into Vaishnavas and Saivas. The Saktas are, happily, almost unknown, their worship of the female generative principle in nature, as symbolised by Kali, the wife of Siva, being the worst form of Hinduism. The Vaishnavas are generally respectable religionists, and live together in large well-ordered *maths*, or monasteries, of which there are a considerable number at Ajodhya, near Faizabad, where twice a year great crowds of pilgrims flock to bathe in the holy river and be purified from their sins. The Saivas, on the other hand, are often vagabonds, wandering over the country in search of offerings from their followers. Their ceremonies, however, are free from any gross indecency. Some of the larger monasteries have a good deal of landed property, and over most large estates held by Hindu proprietors are scatterred small patches of rent-free land, assigned by the piety of the owners for the support of petty shrines kept up by solitary Gosayins and Bairagis It is usual for wealthy Hindu families to maintain a resident Guru, or spiritual guide; while those in humbler circumstances receive annual or biennial visits from their pastor, according to the extent of his *clientele.* These sects are open to men of any caste, high or low, but those who were previously Brahmans are held in special esteem. The caenobitic monasteries are presided over by abbots, or *muhants*, who are elected for life by *panchayats* of all the members. Pre-eminence in Sanskrit learning and austerity of life are the chief qualifications for the post.

Musalman sectaries are, of course, much fewer and less important than those of the Hindus, and have no such elaborate organizations. The great majority are mere religious mendicants, without any special doctrines to distinguish them from other

Muhammadans. They are to be found all over the country, in villages and isolated houses, and not a few hold small rent-free grants even in Hindu estates. Perhaps the most respectable among them are those who are attached to the shrines of the five Muhammadan saints, known throughout Oudh as the *"Panchon Pir."* The chief of these shrines is the Dargah of Syad Salar Mas'ud Ghazi, at Bahraich.

The anti-sacerdotal character of the Muhammadan faith sufficiently accounts for the inferior importance of Musalman sectaries, and the small estimation in which they are held as compared with those of the Hindus. The respective numbers of Shias and Sunnis are not known. It is certain, however, that the latter are much the more numerous, though Shia doctrines, as having been those of the Nawabs of Oudh, are the more fashionable and the more richly endowed.

If it be asked what progress is Christianity making in Oudh, the only answer that can be made is, None that is perceptible by an ordinary lay observer. There are about two hundred and fifty native Christians in Lucknow, which is probably more than are to be found in all the rest of the province put together. The simple monotheism of Islam, and the elaborate theology and cosmogony of Hinduism, dissimilar as they are, present pretty equally impregnable fronts to missionary enterprise.

In speculating on the future of a country, it is of course never safe to omit from any calculation of forces to be reckoned with the possibilities of revolution in religious thought. The probability of revival of Islam has been a good deal talked of as a danger to the Empire. Such a movement is, perhaps, less unlikely than any other, but there is certainly not much sign of it at present. To produce any direct effect on the material condition of the people, nothing short of a great wave of religious enthusiasm, directed to philanthropic ends, would suffice. But of this the likelihood seems too remote to justify more than a mere passing reference to its possibility. Buddhism, with its marvellous renunciation and self-effacement, seems dead in Oudh beyond all chance of resuscitation. A revival of Islam would probably tend rather to military than humanitarian objects. The Hindu revival of the last hundred years, whether it is still going on or not, has probably not affected the richer classes so much as the poorer. Christianity, as already remarked, is making no progress that is appreciable by an outsider.

Perhaps the religion least unlikely to get hold of and influence the wealthier landholders of Oudh is the theism of the Brahmo-Somaj, and on some few of them it has had a certain effect. Uneventful, however, as the horizon may seem at present, it should never be forgotten that in India, at any rate, the age of new religions is not yet past, and that "there are many events in the womb of time which will be delivered." Let us hope that if a great new teacher should arise, we may have the insight to recognise him ere it be too late, and to save us from endeavouring to crush a force which might be guided to precious results.

Much has been, and much more doubtless will be, written on the almost infinitely complex subject of native character. Almost every caste has more or less marked moral features of its own. But the broadest line of distinction which can be drawn is that which separates the character of the Hindu from that of the Musalman. And the distinction appears to consist ultimately in this, that the Hindu mind, and habits of thought, and modes of life, are based on and moulded by a creed of pessimist asceticism; while those of the Musalman are under the sway of a creed of optimistic hedonism. It may be doubted whether sufficient weight has been attached to the effect upon Hindu character of the influence of Buddhism, which was once the prevailing creed of Northern India, and nowhere reigned more absolutely than in the region which was then Kosala, but is now known as Oudh. The future happiness to which the devout Hindu looks forward is no sensual rapture of flowing wine-cups, or of black-eyed houris; it is not, indeed, happiness at all, in the ordinary sense of the term; but rather, escape from the misery of the ceaseless flux and decay of an eternally transient and illusive world. His ideal of virtue consists, primarily, of renunciation, the deadening of passion and desire; and, secondarily, of benevolence and often extravagant generosity. It is only the small fractional minority of thinking Hindus who would, or could, explicitly avow these doctrines, but the idea has been unconsciously engrained into their nature until it has come to lend a distinctive colour, or rather, perhaps, a distinctive want of colour, to the character of the race. With the Muhammadan, on the other hand, a totally different set of theological and ethical doctrines have been at work, and have contributed, together with his history and traditions as a member of a conquering race, to make him what he is. More arrogant, mere sensual, more materially civilised than the Hindu, he seems to have even less faculty for improvement, or for change of any kind. But the immobility of the Hindu is the result of despair of anything better; that of the Musalman arises from contentment with a certain standard of material comfort, and a narrow range of ideas above which he does not seek to rise. The mind of the former tends to work inward, that of the latter outward; but though individuals of both races, here and there, are doubtless ambitious of individual wordly success, yet the mass, both of Hindus and Muhammadans, though from very different causes, are about equally apathetic.

The distinction which I have here sought to draw may to some extent explain, what is undoubtedly the fact, that gentleness, docility, and uncomplaining patience, often accompanied by mental inconsequence and instability of purpose, are the chief characteristics of the Hindu national character. What share of the first three of these qualities the Musalman possesses, he has acquired mainly from long contact with his Hindu neighbours, or, if he be himself of low caste, probably from his own original Hinduism. Of the two latter he has little or nothing, being practically logical, clear-sighted, and persistent enough, but all in a narrow sphere. He is more educated, more cosmopolitan, more conversant with the course of affairs, knows very well what he wants, and is only dissatisfied because he can seldom get it. The Hindu mind, meanwhile, goes on groping vaguely, "in worlds not realised," for it knows not what, and looks forth with timid wonder on the actual world in which it finds itself. Elastic fluidity and tolerance characterise most of its religious and moral conceptions; it will not quit its own path, but willingly admit that what others do may be right for them. It cannot conceive of anyone being born out of a caste, and as caste customs differ, thinks that foreign ways are doubtless good for foreigners.

The ideas of the Musalman, on the other hand, are rigid and stereotyped, so far as he is untinctured by Hindu influences. He knows more of our ways, but likes them less. He can remember, if of middle age, the time when Musalmans ruled in Oudh, and it is hard for him to forget the past when brought into contact with the new order of things. He can understand and utilise the appliances of our civilisation, but dislikes, and affects, at least, to despise it, because it is not his own.

In their full extent, however, these remarks are only intended to apply to that small section of Oudh Musalmans who have almost wholly escaped the influences of Hindu contact. And these are chiefly descendants, often greatly impoverished, of old and wealthy families, living principally in Lucknow, Faizabad, and a few other towns. The rural and the less aristocratic Muhammadans have become to a great extent Hinduised, and the process of assimilation is steadily going on under the compressive and welding forces of British rule.

Of the great mass of the people, Hindus and Musalmans alike, it may be asserted, generally, that they are good-natured; honest among themselves; prone to verbal quarrels, but easily reconciled; considerate, after their own fashion, in their treatment of women and the aged; careful of and kind to their male children, but apt to be careless of their daughters; frugal in their habits, except on special occasions, such as births, deaths, and marriages; extremely submissive to authority; industrious, though, except in the case of the specially agricultural castes, such as Kurmis and Muraos, with a somewhat fitful and desultory industry; careless and unsystematic in most of their arrangements; very prone to lying, and still more to what seems to be lying, but is often, with Hindus at least, the result of imperfectly understanding what is said to them, and of a looseness of thought and mental limitations which are beyond the conception of a European interrogator; averse to any change of which the benefit is not very obvious to them, and craving few boons of Government except to be left alone as much as it can find it in its heart to leave them.

Perhaps the occasions on which they show to most advantage are large fairs and similar gatherings. It is difficult to watch those dense crowds of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of men, women, and children, in their clean, bright-coloured garments, so patient, so good-humoured, so simply amused, not a drunken or a quarrelsome man among them, without feeling that, whatever their other shortcomings, they are the best-behaved holiday-makers and sight-seers in the world. On the whole, a likeable, even a loveable, though, not unfrequently, a somewhat exasperating people; difficult to understand, but well worthy of study; who will repay with interest the expenditure, by all who have to deal with them, of the whole of their available stock of the four great qualities which they most require and most appreciate—gentleness, patience, firmness, and thoroughness.

CHAPTER III

EARLY OUDH HISTORY AND LEGEND

RAMA and Buddha—these are the two names, the two figures, which still stand prominently forth amid the mass of distinct conceptions which are all that we can now form of ancient Oudh.

The former can be for us little more than a name, though he still lives in the hearts and on the lips of millions of Hindus, who revere his memory as the son of Dasaratha, the bender of the magic bow, the wooer of Sita, the patient exile, the loving and beloved brother of the faithful Bharata, the triumphant slayer of the demon Ravana, the ideal type of the heroic king who ruled long and gloriously in Ajodhya the blessed, thousands of years ago. Ajodhya, the capital of the kingdom of Kosala, was founded, according to tradition, by Manu, the father of the human race, ascriptive author of the code that bears his name, and first of the line of Surajbans, or Sun-begotten kings, of whom Rama was the fifty-seventh in descent. The prosperity of the city has waxed and waned with the changing fortunes of the Hindu faith, and when, on the fall of the last of the line of Rama, it became a desert, the royal kinsmen went forth into distant lands, and from them the noblest houses of Rajputana still claim the honour of descent.

It was about the year 1426 B.C. that Nihadbala, last of the Surajbans line, is supposed to have been slain in a great battle, and from that time it lay deserted until the days of King Vikramaditya of Ujjain, about 78 A.D. Modern Hindus, indeed, are in the habit of ascribing the achievements of all Vikramas to this Sakari prince of Ujjain, so their opinion on the point is of little value. But Hweng Thsang, the Chinese Buddhist, who travelled in Hindustan between 629 and 642 A. D. states that a Vikramaditya, of Brahmanical and anti-Buddhist tendencies, was reigning in Sravasti (Ajodhya) at about that period, and it is to him that General Cunningham, of the Archaeological Survey, attributes the restoration of the city. Hindu tradition asserts that he found the site of the old city a jungle, but discovered all the spots sacred to Rama by measurements made, according to ancient records, from a famous shrine known as Nageshwar Nath, and built three hundred and sixty temples in honour of Rama and Sita, Rama's three brothers, Lachman, Bharat, and Satrughan, and his famous monkey ally, Hanuman, who constructed the bridge over the sea by which his army crossed to Lanka (Ceylon), the stronghold of Ravana. All the existing Ajodhya temples, except perhaps two, are comparatively modern; most of them have been built during the last two hundred, many within the last twenty, years; but the sites on which they stand are those of very ancient temples, destroyed either by old age or by eiconoclastic Musalmans.

The other great name of Oudh, a name greater than that of Rama, if human greatness be measured by the mark it makes on the world's history, is also closely connected with Ajodhya. Sakya Buddha was a prince of the house of Kapila (near the modern Gorakhpur), which was an offshoot of the Surajbans line of Kosala. Ajodhya was the scene of his labours for a period of several years, and his favourite resting-place during the rainy season. Some fifty miles north-west of it lie the ruins of Sahet-Mahet, a very ancient city, where a line of Buddhist kings reigned for some five centuries. In the life-time of Gautama Buddha, Sahet-Mahet was the capital of King Prasenajit, whom he converted to the new faith. But his son, Virudatha, persecuted the Sakyas, attacked their country, and put to death five hundred of their maidens who had been destined for his harem. For this impious deed he was destroyed by fire from heaven, in proof whereof the tank in which he vainly sought refuge was shown to Hweng Thsang. The city and kingdom of Sahet-Mahet seem to have flourished as a dependency of the Gupta dynasty of Magadha, and to have gradually declined after the fall of the latter in or about 319 A.D. Fa Hian, an earlier Chinese pilgrim than Hweng Thsang, who visited the city about 400 A.D., found it in ruins, and containing only two hundred families. Its remains, mere jungle-covered mounds, may still be seen a little south of the Rapti river, on the borders of Bahraich to the west and Gonda to the east. They would probably repay a far more thorough excavation than any they have as yet received.

The legend of the life of Buddha has been made familiar to us by the journals of Fa Hian and Hweng Thsang, and by the labours of St. Hilaire, Stanislas Julien, Burnouf, Beale, Max Muller, and a host of other modern writers; and, defaced as it is by wild extravagance, it is yet not difficult to catch sufficiently clear glimpses of a noble personality through the thick veils of Oriental embellishment. The "obstinate questionings" of the reality of outward things in which his "sad and philosophic youth" was passed; the agonizing sense of human misery which turned a prince into an ascetic, and rendered life intolerable to him until he seemed to himself to have found a way of escape and of salvation for mankind; the sombre grandeur of spirit which could look without quailing into the fathomless abyss of annihilation, and find in its dark depths the remedy for human woe—these should be no ineffectual claims to the reverence of an age like ours. If a creed may be judged by the highest outcome of its moral teaching, by the most perfect efflorescence of its spirit, it may be fairly doubted whether it has yet entered into the heart of man to conceive a loftier height of aspiration than that which breathes in this utterance of a later Buddhist master—"Never will I seek, nor receive, private individual salvation; never enter into final peace alone; but for ever, and everywhere, will I live and strive for the universal redemption of every creature throughout all worlds. Until all are delivered never will I leave this world of sin, sorrow, and struggle but will remain where I am."

Never, perhaps, has the spirit of self-negation found loftier or more complete expression, and the country which gave birth to a creed capable of rising to such moral heights as this, should never want a title to the regard and consideration of civilised men. There is no region in the world of such small extent, and, indeed, no region whatever, which can claim to be the Holy Land of two such faiths as Hinduism and Buddhism, which, between them, probably number half of the whole human race as their adherents. Though Ajodhya be now little more than a collection of modern temples, and though the great Buddhist city of Sahet-Mahet lie in ruinous heaps, yet the memory of the great part which she has played in the religious history of the world should secure tender treatment for Oudh, even at the hands of conquerors of alien creeds and of other blood.

The meagre records of Ptolemy, who visited India towards the end of the first century of our era, possess an undoubted interest for the antiquarian, but they are too obscure, and their interpretation too difficult to be more than briefly alluded to here. From Mr.

Benett's epitome of them it may be gatherd that of the three peoples among whom he describes the country as divided, the Tanganoi, who held the country between the Ghaghra and the hills, were an aboriginal tribe, nowhere else mentioned in history, and whose name now only survives in the Tanghans, or hill ponies, of lower Naipal; the Maraemdai, in central and eastern Oudh, were of Scythian origin; while of the Amanichai, who occupied a narrow strip along the Ganges to the south, nothing certain is known, but it is plausibly conjectured that from them the town of Manikpur, near Allahabad, derives its name. Some ascribe it to the "ubiquitous Manik Chand of Kanauj," who lived at the end of the twelfth century, but such a date is far too modern for some of its remains. Among the towns mentioned by Ptolemy, Baraita or Baraila, is identified by Mr. Benett with the modern Rai Bareli, and Sapolas, or Sapotas, with Sravasti or Ajodhya.

About the year 100 A. D. The Sravasti dynasty was overthrown by Samundra Pala, King of Patna—who, according to the legend of Ajodhya, cheated Vikramaditya out of his kingdom in the disguise of a *jogi*—after a desperate struggle which seems to have laid the country desolate. For centuries henceforward nothing is heard of Oudh, and it may be conjectured that the greater part of the country relapsed into jungle and forest, inhabited only by primitive wandering tribes. The great forest which covered the trans-Ghaghra tract was known as the *Gandharb Ban,* while that to the south, embracing what is now Faizabad and Sultanpur, was termed *Banaudha*, or the forest of Oudh. Between 800 and 900 A. D. the Tharus, a hill tribe of Mongolian origin, began to assert their power. They partially cleared the northern forest, and were the dominant race in what is now Gonda and Bahraich at the time of Salar Mas'ud's invasion. Further south of the Ghaghra than the immediate neighbourhood of Ajodhya they do not seem to have ever penetrated. They appear to have been in some sort of subjection to a Sombansi family of Rajputs who were ruling at, or near, the ruins of Sravasti early in the eleventh century. Sohil Deo, otherwise Sohel Dal, the conqueror of Salar Masud, and last of his line, had his head-quarters at Sahet-Mahet. The legend of his downfall is thus related by Mr. Benett:—

"Sohel Dal came in hot from the chase of a few minutes before sunset, and his princess, fearing that the close of the day would prevent his eating his evening meal, sent up tho to roof of the house the wife of his younger brother, whose surpassing beauty detained the sinking sun. Till the supper was ended, the damsel stood and the god watched, and then, as she left her post, a sudden night ensued. The prince inquired why there had been no twilight, and the guilty passion which arose from his discovery of the truth was followed by his punishment in the total destruction of his fort during an appalling tempest. The historical fact underlying the story is the subversion of this small northern kingdom Sri Chandradeo, the Rathor monarch of Kanauj, during the last quarter of the eleventh century." The battle in which Sohil Deo was defeated is said by Mr. Carnegy to have been fought at Satrikh, the burial-place of Salar Sahu, in what is now the Barabanki district. The Rathors appear to have followed up their victory by a general expulsion of the Buddhists from the Trans-Ghaghra districts, and the family of Sohil Deo are said to have fled to Jumla in the territory of Naipal. It may here be added, on the authority of General Cunningham, that during the first half at least of the seventh century the kingdom of Kanauj itself was held by Buddhist kings. They were succeeded by dynastics of Tomar and Rathor Chhatris, probably of Brahmanic tendencies. The later Rathor kings were certainly Brahmanical as is evident from the war waged against the Buddhist dynasty of northern Oudh by Sri Chandradeo. Jai Chandr, the last of his line, was vanquished in a battle at Banaras by Shahab-ub-din Ghori in 1194 A. D., and is said to have been drowned in the Ganges. This defeat finally crushed the power of the Kanauj kingdom.

Until about 1050 A.D. the whole of Oudh, except the trans-Ghaghra tract, seems to have been under the successive dominion of the kings of Patna and Kanauj. But somewhere about that period, the Bhars, and aboriginal tribe, who are still to be found in Faizabad and Sultanpur, revolted from the Kanauj dynasty, and extended their power considerably beyond the present limits of the province. Their sway culminated under the joint rule of two famous brothers, Dal and Bal, who held forts at Karra and Kalinjar, and are said to have mastered the country even as far south as Malwa. The record of their crushing defeat, and of the entire overthrow of the Bhar power by Nasir-ud-din Muhammad, Emperor of Delhi, in 1246 A.D., is to be found in "Farishta". This event appears to have been succeeded by a *morcellement* of the whole country into petty Rajput chiefships, which, under more or less subjection to

Muhammadan governors, and in spite of frequent struggles with rival Muhammadan settlers, have to a great extent maintained their ground up to the present day. The greatest degree of antiquity claimed for their present settlements by most of the Chhatris of southern Oudh is twenty-two generations. It may be noted that twenty-one generations, of thirty years each, would almost exactly cover the period from 1246 A.D. to the present time.

It is something of a relief to turn from these disjointed fragments of information to a more connected narrative. The wild expedition of Syad Salar Mas'ud Ghazi, almost, if not quite, the earliest Muhammadan invasion of Oudh, is also that regarding which our knowledge is least meagre. The story is told in the "Mirat-i-Mas'udi", a translation of which is appended to the second volume of Sir Henry Elliott's "Muhammadan Historians". He calls it an "historical romance", written by Abdur Rahman Chishti, founded on an older book by Mulla Muhammad Ghaznavi, who was in the service of Salar Mas'ud himself, and also of his father, Salar Sahu, both of whom he survived. General Cunningham expresses his opinion that the work, "although a late compilation of the traditions current in the reign of Jahangir, is probably correct in its general outlines." A brief summary of the story may not inappropriately be inserted here.

Syad Salar Mas'ud was born at Ajmir, in the year 405 Hijri = 1014 A.D. His father, Salar Sahu was a general in the Ghaznavite army, and his mother was sister of Sultan Mahmud himself. The favour shown by the latter to his nephew gave rise to so much jealousy against him at the court of Ghazni, that he found it expedient to start, at the age of eighteen, on an invasion of India, at the head of some twenty thousand zealous Moslems, eager to slay and plunder, if they could not convert, the infidel Hindu. After a campaign in the Panjab, Syad Salar marched upon Satrikh, "the most flourishing of all the towns and cities of India." On the strength, apparently, of this somewhat vague description General Cunningham identifies Satrikh with Vesakh, an old name of Ajodhya. It seems, however, at least as probable that the present Satrikh, some twenty miles east of Lucknow, is the place intended. Its situation fits in better than that of Ajodhya with the known movements of the army, while it contains the well-known tomb of Salar Sahu, father of our hero, who is said by the story itself to have died at Satrikh, and in whose honour an annual fair is still held there. Here Mas'ud took up his quarters, and sent out detachments to conquer the surrounding country. Salar Saif-ud-din and Miyan Rajjab, *kotwal* of the army, were despatched against Bahraich, and as they were unable to obtain provisions, a supply of which had to be sent after them, we may infer that the intervening county was somewhat sparsely inhabited. Syad Aziz-ud-din was sent against Hardui, but fell in battle at Gopamau on the banks of the Gumti, where his memory is still revered under the title of the Lal Pir. Mas'ud himself "continued to reside with great magnificence at Satrikh, enjoying the pleasures of the chase."

Satrikh is nearly half-way between Bahraich on the north, and Karra and Manikpur on the south. The chiefs of the last two places now sent an embassy, with presents, to advise Mas'ud to retire. They urged, as was undoubtedly the fact, that he had no manner of business there, that the country had been theirs from time immemorial, and that it had been spared by Sultan Mahmud himself, who had penetrated on one occasion as far as Kanauj. "But you," the message continued, "without any respect for the rights of property, establish yourself in a country that does not belong to you. The action is unworthy of a great mind like yours. It is an infinite sorrow to us that you should be the only child in the house of your father, and that he should have no other descendants. Consider, we pray you, the right. Satrikh is a pleasant place, but it is not fitting that you should remain there. We have ninety thousand picked soldiers"—this, it may be safely affirmed, was a lie—"the princes of Bahraich and other places will come to our help on every side, and you will find yourself in great difficulties. You had better take the prudent course of retiring of your own free will."

However great may have been the mind of Mas'ud in other respects, one cannot help suspecting it to have been somewhat deficient in sense of humour, for the only effect upon him of this most respectable, most reasonable, most unimpeachable message was to make him "rage like a fierce lion," and threaten destruction to the infidels who had sent it. He was soon after joined by his father, from Kabuliz, near Kashmir. Spies were captured on the Sarju or Ghaghra river, who were conveying letters from the Rais of Karra and Manikpur to those of Bahraich, calling on the latter to fall on the Musalmans from the north, while the former attacked them from the south. Mas'ud, having ascertained by means of his own spies that the chiefs of Karra and Manikpur were quite unprepared to resist an attack, despatched his father against them. Salar Sahu took them by surprise, destroyed their forces, "putting thousands of unbelievers to the sword," and sent the two chiefs themselves in chains to Mas'ud, who passed them on to Saif-ud-din at Bahraich. Sahu returned in triumph, leaving Malik Abdullah in charge of Karra, and Kutb-Haidar at Manikpur.

Meanwhile, Saif-ud-din found himself surrounded by enemies, and wrote for reinforcements. Mas'ud, with difficulty, and on the pretext of a hunting excursion, obtained leave from his father to proceed to Bahraich in person. The mere news of his arrival was sufficient to quiet the unbelievers, "whose dimness of perception alone had caused the rising." He hunted in the neighbourhood of Bahraich, and took a fancy to a *surajkund* (tank of the sun) temple, on which he fixed his desires for a dwelling-place. There was a stone image of the sun, called Balarukh, on the edge of the tank, the fame of which had caused Bahraich to flourish. Here, every Sunday, flocked crowds of worshippers, who had a habit of rubbing their heads on the pedestal or feet of the idol, which practice much distressed the monotheistic piety of Mas'ud, and caused him to pray that he might some day convert these benighted pagans from the worship of the material to that of the spiritual sun. He had reached Bahraich on the 17th of the month Shaban, 423 Hijri = 1032 A.D., and shortly after his arrival heard of the death and burial at Satrikh of his father, whereat he wept bitterly, and remarked that he now knew what it was to be orphan.

The Rais of Bahraich, who were probably for the most part Tharus, with perhaps a sprinkling of Bhars and Banjaras, now sent Mas'ud a message couched in terms similar to those which had been used by the ambassadors from Karra and Manikpur, warning him that they were seventeen in number, and that they had two millions of cavalry and three millions of infantry under arms. The oriental mind appears to have been then, as now, without adequate perception of the eloquence of understatement. Malik Nekdil was sent to discuss affairs in general with the Rais, and to take note of their numbers. He made deceitful proposals of peace, which a majority of the Tharu chiefs had the good sense to reject. One of them, Rai Karan, assured him that he did not yet understand what the rainy season of Bahraich was like, and that the climate would soon do their work for them. After this, "the unbelievers all began to talk like fools," and Malik Nekdil returned to Mas'ud, while the enemy advanced, and encamped on the Kasahla, probably the Koriala, river. A council of war decided Mas'ud to take the initiative. He advanced in a north-westerly direction—getting, probably, some good tiger-shooting on the way—defeated the enemy, and then fell back leisurely on Bahraich.

Rai Jogi Das, of the Hindu Koh, sent a messenger with presents to Mas'ud. He was favourably received, and informed that if his master would embrace Islam, he might enjoy his country securely. Other Rais also paid visits, but without ceasing to be hostile. They found a valuable ally in the Tharu chief Sohar Deo, Sohel Dal, or Sohil Deo, as he is variously called—it is by the latter name that he is still locally remembered—by whose advice they prepared large quantities of fireworks, and of poisoned spikes to be fixed in the ground when the Musalman cavalry were about to charge. In two months the Rais were again encamped. "with innumerable forces," on the banks of the Kasahla, and again sent word to Mas'ud, "that if he wished to save his life he had better leave that country and go elsewhere, as the land belonged to their fathers and ancestors, and they were determined to drive him from it." His reply was of the briefest and most simple:—"The country is God's, and the property of him on whom He bestows it. Who gave it to your fathers and ancestors ?" The audacious casuistry of this argument, which at once reduced the question at issue to first principles, much impressed his opponents. A second council of war decided Mas'ud to remain on the defensive, but the enemy drove off his cattle, and forced an attack. Many "noble Turks" suffered martyrdom from the fireworks and the insidious spikes. The loss was great on both sides, and a third of the Musalman army perished. Another quiet interval, however, followed, which Mas'ud, now nineteen years of age, devoted to religious musing at the *surajkund*, under the shade of a huge *mahua* tree which he particularly affected. His meditations were disturbed by a fresh gathering of the foe, and he made up his mind for the worst. Assembling his forces, he advised all who cared for their lives to retreat to the Panjab, but such as were desirous of martyrdom were left at liberty to remain. They all wept, and vowed never to desert him. In fact, it was like the day of judgment, or even more solemn."

On the 18th and 19th of the month Rajjab-ul-Murajjab 424 Hijri, continuous fighting went on. Two-thirds of what remained of the Musalmans were slain, and among them Saif-ud-din. The bodies of the faithful were cast into the *surajkund,* "in the hope that through the odour of their martyrdom the darkness of unbelief might be expelled from that spot"—which strikes one as being a slightly equivocal aspiration. Mas'ud then "remounted his mare of sacred blood," charged the enemy, and put them to flight. But Sohil Deo, and a few others who had reserved their troops, attacked the body guard, which was all that was now left to him, and on Sunday, the 20th of Rajjab 424 Hijri = 14th June 1033 A. D., at the hour of evening prayer, a chance arrow pierced the main artery in the arm of the Prince of the Faithful. His sun-like countenance immediately became pale as the moon. Repeating the text in praise of martyrdom, he dismounted, was carried under his favourite *mahua* tree, and there expired. The remnant of his body guard was cut to pieces by Sohil Deo, to whom, however, Mas'ud appeared the same night in a vision, and foretold his violent death, which came to pass as already related in this chapter. So ended this singular invasion, and Islam was in abeyance in Oudh for one hundred and sixty years, until the conquests of Shahab-ud-din Ghori, in 1193 A. D., enabled him to place Kutb-ud-din Aibak as his representative on the throne of Delhi.

It was probably about the middle of the thirteenth century that the present Dargah of Syad Salar was built. It was visited about 1340 A. D. by Sultan Muhammad Toghak, after his suppression of the revolt of Ain-ul-Mulk, and is still the scene of a large annual fair held on the first Sunday in Jeth. Mas'ud is said by tradition to have condescended, while at Satrikh, to take to himself as wife the daughter of a converted Teli, or oilman, who dwelt at Radauli, in what is now the Barabanki district, and on the great day of the fair—said to be the anniversary of the martyr's marriage as well as his death—a representative of his wife's family regularly arrives from Radauli, with a bridal couch and other offerings for the use of his shade. The Dargah is a massive, battlemented building, in the centre of which stands the tomb itself, inside a dark and narrow cell, entered by a single door some five feet high. Till a year or two ago, there was no other means of ventilation, and as into this cell the pilgrims crush together all day long in successive batches of as many as a vigilant police, armed with knotted handkerchiefs to drive back the crowd, and assisted by barricades, will admit, the state of the atmosphere towards the close of a hot day in May may be more easily imagined than described. Some eight or nine years ago more than twenty people were crushed and suffocated to death, after which police supervision somewhat mitigated the crowding, but was powerless perceptibly to improve the vitiated atmosphere. Recently, however, an energetic Deputy Commissioner, among other "modern touches here and there," which redeem the shrine, if not from "nothingness," at least from annihilation of its worshippers, has succeeded in getting a window opened in the wall of the holy of holies, the application to which of a thermantidote considerably cools and purifies the heated horrors of the atmosphere within. The curious part of the matter is that though the *khadims,* or servants of the shrine, vehemently objected to this innovation before it was made, the pilgrims have quite accepted the *belati pankha* as part of the sacred apparatus, and call the current of air which proceeds from it the breath of the martyred saint. They have even begun to place on it offerings of pice, cowries, and flowers; and in two or three years time these will doubtless form a recognised source of income to the *khadims,* and be mortgaged, fought over, and sued for, with as much earnestness as if the origin of the tribute were lost in the mists of antiquity.

The fair itself is essentially a poor man's fair, and is attended by low-caste Hindus quite as largely as by Muhammadans. This is a curious illustration of the laxity of Hindu religious conceptions, considering that the one object of Salar Mas'ud's life was the destruction of their faith and the slaughter of its adherents. This anomaly is noticed in Sleeman's "Tour in Oudh," and is there explained on the theory that thinking Hindus regard the invader as having been an instrument of divine vengeance, to whom power was given over them for their sins; while the ignorant masses hold "that the old man must still have a good deal of interest in heaven, which he may be induced to exercise in their favour by suitable offerings and personal applications to his shrine." It is, perhaps, a more probable explanation that the Hindu worshippers believe themselves, in some confused way, to be adoring, not so much Syad Salar, as the old Sun god, whose image, Balarukh, has been already mentioned. It is, at any rate, certain that they speak of the personage whom they come, as they put it, to interview, as "Bala Badshah", or "King Bala"; and it is not easy to see how, except by some such confusion as this, the name should have come to be applied to the Musalman hero and Ghazi.

The crescentade of Salar Mas'ud has been dwelt on at what may seem undue length, mainly because it was the first impact of Islam on Oudh, and has left more traces, and is known in fuller detail, than any subsequent invasion; partly, also, to be perfectly candid, because its scenes are more familiar to the writer. Its hold on the popular imagination is testified to by the fact that "the Musalmans of Oudh are apt to associate with Syad Salar every object or tradition of antiquity to which they can ascribe no certain origin."

It is a somewhat humiliating confession, but it is probably a true one, that of the history of Oudh, from the time of Syad Salar's expedition to the appointment of S'adat Khan as Subahdar of the province in 1720 A.D., a period of nearly seven hundred years, we have next to no real information. Written Hindu records there are almost none, and from Muhummadan chronicles little can be gleaned beyond such unfruitful items as that this governor was superseded by that, or that the infidels of such a place revolted, and were put down with great slaughter. Local Hindu traditions there are in abundance, but it seems almost impossible to connect them with any degree of certainty with such facts as are to be gathered from the Muhammadan historians. Thus we learn from the latter that in 1226 A.D. Malik Nasir-ud-din was appointed as governor of Oudh, and "overthrew the accursed Bartuh (Bhars ?), under whose hands and swords more than one hundred and twenty thousand Musalmans had received martyrdom"; all of which was, no doubt, very vivid and real to him, and to the poor Bartuh, whoever they were, but is not quite so much so to us. In 1243 A.D. the Emperor Ala-ud-din sent his uncle Nasir-ud-din as governor of Bahraich, where he "devoted himself to peaceful pursuits, and the improvement of the condition of his subjects... In that country and in the hills he fought many battles against the infidels. Under his kind rule Bahraich attained great prosperity." This Nasir-ud-din afterwards became Emperor, and it was he who again defeated the Bhars under the brothers Dal and Bal, as already related, in 1246 A.D. Or perhaps these two defeats of the Bhars may be really one and the same, and a confusion of twenty years have crept into the chronology. Or, again, the victory which is spoken of as if it followed immediately on his appointment as governor, may not in reality have occurred till twenty years after that event, when he had become Emperor. Oudh and Bahraich were evidently two distinct governments or fiefs. The latter, including Gonda, seems to have been always held singly, owing doubtless to its isolated position, cut off from the rest of the province by a great unfordable river. The former was sometimes held jointly with Karra, sometimes with Badaun, and sometimes with Zafarabad.

It would be easy to accumulate such items as these, were it worth while to do so. But as mere isolated events they are useless. They might serve as landmarks, if we were in possession of general information as to the movement of society and popular life in Oudh. Taken by themselves, they are as worthless as would be an assortment of milestones in the absence of a passable road on which to erect them. Local details of the fortunes of particular families are plentiful enough, but scarcely any generalisations wide enough to be entitled to a place in a provincial history can be arrived at. It must suffice to say that for about a century and a half after the conquests of Shahab-ud-din Ghori, though Musalman influence in Upper India was steadily becoming consolidated, yet Musalman settlements in Oudh were few and insignificant. But from about the year 1350 A.D. the tide of Muhammadan immigration set steadily in, and continued with short intervals untill nearly the middle of the eighteenth century. The course which it followed lay chiefly from the north-west to the south-east of the province, and formed a broad belt running through Hardui, Lucknow, Barabanki, and Faizabad. In Unao, Sitapur, and Sultanpur, the Musalman colonies were less numerous and sporadic; while in Kheri, Bahraich, and Gonda to the north, and Rai Bareli and Pratabgarh to the south, they were few and isolated.

CHAPTER IV

THE NAWABI (1720–1856)

The wheel of fortune was whirling at the very top of its speed in Upper India during the early part of the last century. Adventurer after adventurer rose like bubbles to the surface of the seething cauldron, floated there for a moment, and then vanished into an obscurity from which, in most cases, they had no apparent claim to have arisen. Some few, of tougher texture or more favourably environed than the rest, contrived to keep themselves with more or less permanence at the top of affairs. One of the most distinguished of these was S'adat Khan, founder of the modern dynasty of Oudh. His original name was Muhammad Amin, and he came of a noble Syad family which derived its descent from the Prophet himself through the Imam Musa Kazim, and had long been settled at Naishapur in Khorasan. He was described by Alexander Dow as "the infamous son of a yet more infamous Persian pedlar," but this vigorous language may perhaps be to some extent explained by the fact that S'adat Khan's grandson Shuja-ud-daulah had refused to grant certain salt contracts to the historian who used it. Mirza Nasir, father of Muhammad Amin, had been in the service of the Emperor Bahadur Shah, second son of Aurangzib, and on the news of his death, Muhammad Amin, in his, turn set out for India. He was well received by the then Emperor Farukhsiyar, who appointed him commandant of his body guard, and afterwards made him governor of Agra. We need not do more than mention the murder of Farukhsiyar, in 1719 A.D.. by the Syad brothers Abdullah Khan and Hosen Ali, who were then *de facto* masters of the empire; the subsequent elevation of Muhammad Shah to the throne; and his release from the tyranny of the Syads and the overthrow of the latter by means of a conspiracy, in which Muhammad Amin was a principal agent. As a reward for his services, he was appointed Subahdar of Oudh in 1720 A.D., under the title of S'adat Ali Khan, Burhan-ul-Mulk, and seems to have been occupied for several years in establishing some kind of order in his province. In 1736 he defeated the Mahrattas under Baji Rao, in the Doab, and about the same time his daughter married his nephew Muhammad Mukim, better known to fame as Safdar Jang, who, on his death, succeeded him in the governorship of Oudh. S'adat Khan took a conspicuous—and, according to what is perhaps a calumny of Dow's, a treacherous—part in resisting the celebrated invasion of Nadir Shah of Persia in 1738-39. He was taken prisoner at Karnal, and died before the year was out.* S'adat Khan's policy in Oudh seems to have been to cherish the peasantry, and to keep in check the encroachments of the larger landholders; and he was probably the first to make the power of a comparatively strong and central government felt throughout the province. Ajodhya and Lucknow were the places at which he chiefly resided, and, having assumed his crest the fish which is still, so to speak, the arms of Oudh, he changed the name of the well-known fort of Lucknow from Kila Likna (so called after the founder, one Likna, Ahir) to Machhi Bhawan, or the fish house. Though he continued, after his appointment as Subahdar, to play a prominent part in the politics, or rather, in the intrigues of the empire, yet he identified himself more closely with the province, and spent more of his time there than any previous governor had done. He was a keen but unsuccessful candidate for the office of Wazir of the Empire, an honour which was reserved for his successor to attain. He left a large treasure, said to have amounted to some nine millions sterling, three millions of which he is related to have offered to Nadir Shah as a ransom for Delhi. The offer, however, was not accepted, and the city was sacked. His hoards must have been raised by unscrupulous exactions, but these seem to have been confined to the rich. His great object was the aggrandisement of his own family, in which he certainly succeeded, in spite, if the story may be trusted, of his own ignominious death by poison.

It may here be convenient to give a list of the eleven rulers who composed the Oudh dynasty, showing their dates and mutual relationships :—

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*The story goes that S'adat Khan and his great rival, Nizam-ul-Mulk, were so grossly insulted by Nadir Shah for their treacherous conduct towards the Emperor of Delhi, that they agreed to take poison rather than survive the indignity. The ingenious Nizam-ul-Mulk, however, only pretended to swallow the poisoned draught, and came to life again as soon as he was assured of his rival's death.

1.	S'adat Ali Khan, Burhan-ul-Mulk	1720—1739
2.	Mansur Ali Khan, Safdar Jang, nephew and son-in-law of No. 1	1739—1756
3.	Shuja'-ud-daulah, son of No. 2	1756—1775
4.	Asaf-ud-daulah, son of No. 3	1775—1797
5.	Wazir Ali, reputed son of No. 4	1797—1798
6.	S'adat Ali, half-brother of No 4	1798—1814
7.	Ghazi-ud-din Haidar, son of No. 6	1814—1827
8.	Nasir-ud-din Haidar, son of No. 7	1827—1837
9	Muhammad Ali Shah, brother of No. 7	1837—1842
10.	Amjad Ali Shah, son of No. 9	1842—1847
11.	Wajid Ali Shah, son of No. 10	1847—1856

Muhammad Mukim, under the style of Mansur Ali Khan, Safdar Jang, succeeded his uncle and father-in-law. He was the first "Nawab Wazir," a combination of his two titles of Nawab of Oudh and Wazir of the Empire. This latter honour, as also the title of Mir Atish, or Commander of the Artillery, was bestowed upon him by the Emperor Ahmad Shah, who succeeded Muhammad Shah on the throne of Delhi in 1749.

Safdar Jang took an active part in the external politics and wars of the empire against the Mahrattas, and also against the Duranis under Ahmad Shah Abdali, who were defeated in the Panjab in 1748. With the assistance of Rohillas, he drove the Mahrattas out of the Doab in 1851. Of his relations with the people of Oudh, we know but little. He completed the city of Faizabad, the foundation of which had been begun by S'adat Khan, and divided his time between it and Lucknow. Faizabad is still spoken of by the country-folk as "Bangla", the origin of the name being that, before the erection of the modern city, S'adat Khan had a shooting-box or *bangla* (*anglice*, bungalow), on the banks of the Ghaghra, which may still be seen by the curious in the compound of what was the Dilkhusha palace, but is now the residence of the Opium Agent. Safdar Jang's most trusted instrument was Raja Newal Rai, a fighting Kayath, who was killed in an engagement with the troops of the Nawab of Farukhabad, with whom the Nawab Wazir's own treachery had embroiled him. He had induced Kaim Khan Bangash, who was Nawab of Farukhabad in 1746, to attack his own countrymen, the Rohilla Afghans, who had shown themselves troublesome neighbours to Oudh. Kaim Khan fell in fight, and Safdar Jang promptly seized his territory, and, pacifying his brother Ahmad

Khan with a pension, went off to Delhi, leaving Newal Rai in charge of both Oudh and Farukhabad. Ahmad Khan, who at first sat down tamely under his injuries, was roused to action by the stinging reproaches of an Afghan woman, who had been insulted by one of Newal Rai's soldiers. He collected an army, defeated and killed Newal Rai, who marched to resist him, on the banks of the Kalinadi, crossed the Ganges, and was soon master of Oudh. Safdar Jang hastened to the scene of action with a large force, accompanied by Suraj Mal, the Jat chief of Bhartpur, but was completely defeated by Ahmad Khan with very inferior numbers. This victory left the Afghans for a short time in full possession of Oudh and Allahabad. They soon, however, fell out among themselves. and Safdar Jang did not scruple to call in the Mahrattas, with whose aid Ahmad Khan was driven into Kumaon, cooped up under the hills, and forced to capitulate.

Shortly before his death, Safdar Jang lost the favour of the Emperor Ahmad Khan owing to his share in the murder of a eunuch named Jawid, of whom the queen-mother had been enamoured. He found himself superseded as Wazir of the Empire by Ghazi-ud-din (grandson of Nizam-ul-mulk, the successful rival of S'adat Khan), who had been a *protege* of his own. He retired to Oudh in disgust, and died in 1756. About all that is known of his internal policy is that he made a Hindu, Newal Rai, his minister, and that he commenced the construction of a bridge across the Gumti at Lucknow, which was completed by his grandson Asaf-ud daulah. The mausoleum of Safdar Jang at Delhi, whither his remains were removed for interment, is well known as one of the finest works of the kind in India.

Shuja'-ud-daulah, his son and successor, had married in 1743 the Bahu Begam, a Persian lady, whose grandfather had been Aurangzib's head cook, and whose wrongs were to be afterwards immortalised by the eloquence of Burke. His claim to the succession was disputed, but unsuccessfully, by his cousin Muhammad Kuli Khan, Governor of Allahabad, who was supported by Ismail Khan, Kabuli, who had been the chief military adherent of Safdar Jang. The wretched nominal Emperor Alamgir II was at this time a virtual prisoner in the hands of his tyrannical Wazir, Ghazi-ud-din, and his son Ali Gohar, the Crown Prince, was a fugitive from Delhi, wandering about India in search of support. In 1758 he joined Shuja-ud-daulah and Muhammad Kuli Khan in an invasion of Bengal, where English influence had a year before been made paramount by the victory of Clive at Plassy, or, more correctly, Palasi. And now Shuja'-ud-daulah was guilty of what was probably the greatest crime of his life. He treacherously lingered behind Muhammad Kuli and Ali Gohar, seized the fort of Allahabad, and on the return of his cousin to recover it, captured and put him to death. Ali Gohar, meanwhile, on receipt of a moderate sum from Clive, withdrew across the Karamnasa, a small river which served as a rubicon between Bengal and the upper provinces, and again fell into the hands of Shuja'-ud-daulah. In November 1759 the unhappy Alamgir was murdered by Ghazi-ud-din, and for some months there was no recognised Emperor of Delhi. Ali Gohar, however, claimed the title, and appointed Shuja'-ud-daulah, whose prisoner he practically was, Wazir of the Empire, an honour which, as previously mentioned, had been lost by Safdar Jang shortly before his death. When Kasim Ali, who had been set up by the "ring" of English adventurers who then ruled and exploited Bengal, as Nawab of Murshidabad in supersession of Mir Jafar, finally broke with his masters, he fled from Patna to Shuja'-ud-daulah, who had again, after a brief separation, got hold of Ali Gohar, *alias* Shah Alam. A fresh invasion of Bengal followed, which was defeated at Baksar on the 23rd of October 1764.

Shuja'-ud-daulah now retired to his own territory, while Shah Alam joined the English. It was proposed by the Calcutta Council to confer on the nominal Emperor all the Wazir's possessions, except Ghazipur and Banaras, which were to be granted to the Company. Shah Alam, indeed, went so far as to issue a *farman*, dated 29th of December 1764, assigning "the country of Ghazipur, and the rest of the Zamindari of Rajah Balwant Singh belonging to the Nizamat of the Nawab Shuja'-ud-daulah," to the Company, on account of the expense and danger caussd them by the latter waging war "unjustly, and contrary to our royal pleasure!" This arrangement, however, was disallowed by the Court of Directors as being onerous and profitless, and in 1765 Shuja'-ud-daulah was recognised as in possession of Oudh, Ghazipur, and Banaras; Allahabad and Karra being reserved for Shah Alam. The despatch of the Court of Directors forbidding the intended transfer of Oudh to Shah Alam has always been deemed a laudable instance of their moderation.

It is not surprising, at any rate, that Shuja'-ud-daulah should have regarded its effect in that light, though ignorant of the cause; for it was received just at the time when, after being defeated in an engagement near Karra, he had thrown himself on the mercy of the victors, from whom he could have little expected such easy terms. It is worthy of note, as Sir H. Lawrence has pointed out, that even under circumstances when he might have been supposed likely to agree to anything, Shuja'-ud-daulah insisted, and Clive consented, that "trade and factories" should not be so much as mentioned in the treaty—a pretty significant proof of the dread with which the Company's mercantile operations were regarded.

In 1768 the agreement of 1765 was confirmed at Banaras, and the Nawab undertook to limit his force to 35,000 men, of whom 10,000 were to be cavalry, 10,000 infantry, 500 artillerymen, and 9,500 irregulars. Of these the infantry alone were to be armed and trained in European fashion.

In 1772 the Mahrattas threatened Rohilkhand, and Shuja'-ud-daulah entered into an agreement with the Rohillas for their expulsion, in consideration of being paid four hundred thousand pounds. It was about this time that an altercation took place between Hastings and Sir Robert Barker, who was commanding a brigade sent to co-operate against the Mahrattas, regarding the choice of a diplomatic agent with the Wazir. Hastings, writes Sir H. Lawrence, "carried his point after an angry correspondence, the commencement of that acrimony which prevailed in the discussion of Oudh affairs during Mr. Hastings' administration, and which has been so prominent a feature in most of the discussions regarding that province." It is, perhaps, some little consolation to reflect that if we too, in this our day, have been guilty of controversial bitterness, we are, after all only treading in the footsteps of our fathers who were before us.

In September 1773 Hastings and the Wazir had a personal conference at Banaras, at which a new treaty was concluded, declaring that, whereas Shah Alam, contrary to the treaty of the 16th of August 1765, granting him Karra and Allahabad for his expenses, had assigned those districts to the Mahrattas, his rights were forfeited, and transferred to the Wazir for a payment of fifty lakhs, or five hundred thousand pounds. It was also stipulated that Oudh should pay for all such troops of the Company's service as she, or rather her despot, required, at the rate of Rs. 2,10,000 *per mensem* for each brigade, consisting of two European and six sepoy battalions, with one company of artillery. Shuja'-ud-daulah had already conceived the design of crushing the Rohillas, and took the opportunity of this meeting with Hastings at Banaras to ascertain whether he might count on English support in the attempt. He alleged that they were about, under the lead of Hafiz Rahmat and other Sardars, to seize Etawah, which he could not permit especially as they had not paid any part of the forty lakhs which they had agreed on as the price of the expulsion of the Mahrattas; and offered to pay forty lakhs to the Company for the loan of a brigade which he was to support himself, at the stipulated rate of Rs. 2,10,000 monthly, until it was discharged.

His proposals were accepted by Hastings, and the result of battle of Babul Nala, fought on the 23rd of April 1774. The Rohillas were defeated, after a gallant struggle, by the English force under the command of Colonel Champion, while the Nawab's troops were very active in plundering the camp of their vanquished enemies. The whole transaction, exaggerated though the subsequent atrocities have probably been, will always remain an indelible blot on the record of the British power in India. In expiation of Shuja'-ud-daulah's share in the matter, perhaps all that can be urged is, that it was his interest, as a matter of policy, to crush turbulent neighbours; that he was a Shia, while the Rohillas were Sunnis; and that he had on his side such moral force as the sanction of Shah Alam and the support of Hastings could convey—all of which, however, does not amount to very much.

It had been agreed by Hastings and the Wazir, during the Banaras conference of 1773, that a permanent British Resident should be appointed, and in that capacity a Mr. Middleton was sent by the Governor-General to Lucknow. By the time, however, that the Rohilla war was concluded, the opposition party, headed by Francis, were in a majority in Council, and one of the first assertions of their power was the supersession of Middleton by an agent of their own selection named Bristow. This bone of contention was the cause of quarrels which lasted for years, and of repeated shiftings of the rival Residents. 1776, Hastings recovered his majority by the death of Monson, and promptly recalling Bristow, sent Middleton back to Lucknow. In 1780, Bristow was reinstated by the express order of the Court of Directors. In 1781 Hastings again displaced him, restored him in 1782, and finally ousted him in 1783. There was certainly no lack of personal acrimony at this period in the treatment of Oudh affairs.

But we have anticipated the course of events by several years, and must go back to 1775. Shuja'-ud-daulah was taken ill during that year, while engaged in the settlement of Rohilkhand, and died at Faizabad, of which city his tomb, the Gulab Bari (or rose-garden) is one of the chief ornaments. He was the first of his line whose remains were not carried westwards. Whether his death was due to natural causes or not, is uncertain. Mr. Carnegy mentions two conflicting rumours on the subject; one, that he was worried to death by the triumphant opposition in the Calcutta Council; the other, that he was wounded by a poisoned dagger while insulting the modesty of a daughter of the Nawab of Farukhabad. Of the two, the latter seems the least unlikely; the former probably originated in the lively imagination of some ardent partisan of Hastings. Shuja'-ud-daulah was a man of undeniable ability, and, Colonel Champion to the contrary notwithstanding, of marked personal courage. He was perhaps even less troubled with scruples than most Indian rulers of the time. Dow's description of him, though, as before pointed out, that of an enemy, is worth quoting. He speaks of him as "extremely handsome in his person, about five feet eleven inches in height, and so nervous and strong that with one stroke of the sabre he can cut off the head of a buffalo. He is active, passionate, and ambitious; his penetrating eye seems at first sight to promise uncommon acuteness and fire of mind, but his genius is too volatile for depth of thought, and he is consequently more fit for the manly exercises of the field than for deliberation in the closet. Till of late, he gave little attention to business. He was up before the sun, mounted his horse, rushed into the forest, and hunted down tiger or deer till the noon of day. He then returned, plunged into the cold bath, and spent his afternoons in the harem among his women. Such was the state of Shuja'-ud-daulah's mind till the late war (*i. e.* the campaign ending with the battle of Baksar)....Stung with the loss of reputation, his passions have taken another course. His activity is employed in disciplining his army, and he now spends more time at the comptoir of his finances, than in dalliance with the ladies of his seraglio. His authority is therefore established, his revenues increased, and his army on a respectable footing. But with all his splendid qualities, he is cruel, treacherous, unprincipled, and deceitful "

His business capacities were undoubted. By 1768, four years after his defeat at Baksar, he had paid off all his debts, and had a full treasury and flourishing revenue. He reduced and, with French aid, remodelled his army, and founded an arsenal at Faizabad. It was English jealousy of the progress he was making which led to the treaty of 1768, limiting his army to thirty-five thousand men. Like Safdar Jang, he had a Hindu minister, Beni Bahadur, Brahman. Such writers as Franklin and Scott, who were not, like Dow, prejudiced against him by a private grudge, speak of him as "an excellent magistrate, a lover of justice, and anxiously desirous for the prosperity of his country...wise and dignified in character. affable, humane, and generous... Sincerely beloved by his own subjects, even the sons of Hafiz Rahmat wept at his death." This last item sounds apocryphal, unless, indeed, their tears were tears of joy; but we may, at any rate, agree with Sir Henry Lawrence, that Shuja'-ud-daulah was "an able, energetic, and intelligent prince, and that he possessed at least the ordinary virtues of Eastern rulers." He was only forty-six years of age at his death, on the 26th of January 1775, an event which marks the close of an epoch in the external history of Oudh. The first three Nawabs had all been pre-eminently soldiers. S'adat Khan and Safdar Jang had met the Persians, the Duranis, and the Mahrattas in the field. Shuja'-ud-daulah had crossed swords with the English; and the tale is still told in Oudh of how he would have been the victor at Baksar had not his gunners played him false, and loaded with trusses of straw instead of with ball.

But with the accession of his son Asaf-ud-daulah, fourth Nawab and third Wazir of the Empire, a great change came over Oudh politics. With Shuja'-ud-daulah there had been but little interference from Calcutta, and what there was, was owing mainly to his initiative. But his son, during the twenty-two years that he occupied the *masnad*, was little more than a passive instrument in the hands of successive Governors-General. His share in Delhi affairs was almost confined to a well-timed offering of men and money in 1776, which liberated Shah Alam from the tyranny of Zabita Khan, which was nearly as oppressive to him as that of Ghazi-ud-din had been to his father. For this service he was rewarded with the Wizarat of the Empire.

The Calcutta Council began their relations with the new

Nawab by assuming that the death of Shuja'-ud-daulah had put an end to all engagements entered into with him. After four months of discussion, Bristow negotiated a fresh treaty, which affirmed friendship between the contracting parties, and provided that the Nawab should employ no Europeans without the sanction of the Company; that neither party should consent to any proposals made to it by the Emperor of Delhi against the other; that Karra and Allahabad should be confirmed to the Nawab, and Banaras, Jaunpur, Ghazipur, and the other possessions of Chait Singh—yielding an annual revenue of twenty-three lakhs—should be ceded to the Company. The monthly cost of brigade was raised from Rs. 2,10,000 to Rs. 2,60,000. All arrears due by his father were to be paid up by the Nawab. The Company, on its part, was to defend Oudh, Karra, Allahabad, and the recent acquisitions of Shuja'-ud-daulah in Rohilkhand and the Doab. These terms were to be in force during the lifetime of Asaf-ud-daulah. In addition to the permanent brigade quartered on Oudh by the Faizabad treaty with Shuja'-ud-daulah, a "temporary" brigade was imposed on his successor in 1776 or 1777, and from time to time several detached corps were added, at a further aggregate cost of twelve lakhs a year. Besides the *Resident*, whose appointment had been agreed on by Hastings and the late Nawab, a Major Palmer, as *Company's Agent*, at a moderate salary of Rs. 2,20,000 a year, was also sent to Lucknow, whither the Oudh capital had now been permanently removed from Faizabad by Asaf-ud-daulah, with the object, it is believed, of escaping from his mother, the Bahu Begam, who continued to reside at the latter place.

Of the ill-feeling between these two, mother and son, the mistaken interference of the Francis majority in the Council, in the first place, and Hastings' subsequent unscrupulous repudiation of their engagements, in the second, were the principal causes. The anti-Hastings junto began the mischief by puting the Bahu Begam, Shuja'-ud-daulah's widow, in possession of her deceased husband's treasures, as well as of an enormous *jaghir*, comprising Salon, Parsadipur, Jais, Karra, Tanda, Wazirganj, &c. &c. To these treasures it does not seem that she had any right, either rational or customary, though she did, indeed, produce a will, which was probably false, and which, whether true or false, would certainly never have been enforced in any native state. All that she was really entitled to was maintenance in a manner befitting her dignity, and this there is no reason to suppose that she would not have obtained from her son. By this alienation, Asaf-ud-daulah was deprived of the power of paying off his father's debts to the Company, as the treaty of 1775 bound him to do; and as a natural consequence, he soon fell into arrears with the current demands for the pay of the troops. As might have been anticipated, he endeavoured to set himself right by plundering his mother.

The Court of Directors, in a letter addressed to Hastings in 1783, wrote as follows :—

"In 1775, the Resident at the Wazir's Court not only obtained from the Begam, widow of the late Shuja'-ud-daulah, on the Nawab's account, thirty lakhs of rupees, half of which was to be paid to the company, but also the forbearance of twenty-six lakhs, for the repayment of which she had security in land, on the Nawab's agreeing to renounce all further claim upon her; and to this agreement the Company were guaranteed."

In acknowledgment of these fifty-six lakhs, the Nawab gave his mother a written undertaking, dated the 15th of October, 1775, renouncing all further claims upon her, and confirming her in the above mentioned jaghirs. The collections were to be made by her own agents, and she was to retain her mints at Ajodhya and Faizabad. This agreement was guaranteed by Bristow on the part of the Company, and however weak her claim might originally have been, the Begam was now fairly justified in considering herself as secure as the solemn engagements of her son and the Company could make her.

A period of nearly six years followed, during which the internal affairs of Oudh went on from bad to worse. The introduction of European officers into the Nawab's army, and the discharge of a number of irregular troops, led to a serious mutiny, which was not suppressed without considerable loss. Asaf-ud-daulah abandoned himself to dissipation, leaving the management of affairs to his minister, Murtaza Khan, who was soon assassinated by Khwajah Basant, a eunuch in command of the army, who had got up a party in favour of S'adat Ali, younger brother of the Nawab. Khwajah Basant was promptly executed for the murder, and S'adat Ali, who was destined to become himself Nawab some ten years later, fled for safety to British territory. "Thus, in one day," to quote Sir H. Lawrence, "the Wazir lost his minister, his general, and his brother." The former was replaced by Haidar

Beg Khan, a creature of Hastings, a man of considerable vulpine astuteness, and considerably less than no character. Meanwhile, arrears of subsidy accumulated rapidly. "The regular subsidy," as Sir H. Lawrence tersely puts it, "was originally twenty-five lakhs and a half; the Francis junto raised it to thirty-one lakhs and two-fifths, but what with the expense of the temporary brigade, extra troops, and numerous officers employed with the Oudh army, as well as various miscellaneous accounts, the demands, during seven years of Mr. Hastings' administration, averaged one hundred lakhs annually, while in spite of constant screwing, the receipts only averaged seventy lakhs; leaving in 1781 a deficit of two and one-tenth crores of rupees (= £2,100,000). To meet this frightful item, there was a materially decreased revenue." The pay of the Nawab's servants and the allowances of members of his family were heavily in arrears. The ladies of the harem were in absolute want of food. While, to complete the picture, Colonel Hannay, who had been appointed farmer of the revenue of Bahraich, Gonda, and Gorakhpur, in 1778, made such good use of his time and opportunities that he "dropped off gorged" in 1781, with, if Burke's information, which is accepted by Marshman, may be trusted, three hundred thousand pounds in his pocket. The terror which this man established in the country and in the mind of the Nawab may be imagined from the terms in which the latter wrote to Hastings regarding a rumour that he was again to be quartered upon Oudh :—

"Colonel Hannay is inclined to request your permission to be employed in the affairs of this quarter. If, by any means, any matter of this country dependent on me should be entrusted to the Colonel, I swear by the holy Prophet that I will not remain here, but will go from hence to you. From your kindness, let no concern dependent on me be entrusted to the Colonel."

And this language, be it remembered, was used by a man whose letters to Hastings were usually of the most meekly submissive type. Whether owing to this letter or not, Hannay was not sent back to Oudh. But he left behind him plenty of imitators, though on a less gigantic scale. These men, whether forced into the Nawab's service as revenue farmers, or on military duty, seem to have been the curse of the country, which they plundered with a thoroughness and audacity that were truly Verrine. They ill-treated and rack-rented the zamindars in the one case, and, in the other, interfered with the course of trade, established markets of their own, abolishing those which were already in existence, and collected the customs on their own account. Small wonder that the revenue dwindled.

In 1778 the Nawab had petitioned for removal of part of the troops quartered upon him, as they were not needed, and were ruinously costly. This request was not granted until 1781, when, at a personal conference between Hastings and Asaf-ud-daulah at Chunar, it was agreed, on the 19th of September :—

(1) That all English troops, except one brigade and one extra regiment, were to be withdrawn from the Nawab's territories; and

(2) that "as great distress has arisen to the Nawab's Government from the military power and dominion of the jaghirdars, he be permitted to resume such jaghirs as he may find necessary, with a reserve that all such for the amount of whose jaghirs the Company are guarantees, shall, in case of the resumption of their lands, be paid the amount of their net collections, through the Resident, in ready money."

At the time when this treaty was made, the Company's finances were in an exceedingly bad condition, and in order to better them, Hastings practically sold to the Nawab permission to break his engagements, which had been guaranteed, whether rightly or wrongly, by the Company, for an immediate supply of fifty five lakhs of ready money, and a stipulation for the payment of an additional twenty lakhs. The well-known outbreak at Banaras provoked by Hastings' outrageous treatment of Chait Singh, had occurred in the previous August; and on the utterly frivolous pretext, supported by the famous affidavits made before Impey, that the Begams had taken part in this *emeute*, the work of confiscation was begun.

No need to dwell here upon the oft-told, shameful tale. In justice, however, to Asaf-ud-daulah, it should be stated that, whether or not he had made the first proposal for resuming the Jaghirs—(the annual value of which was nearly thirty lakhs, or three hundred thousand pounds)—there can be no doubt whatever that when it actually came to the point, he was exceedingly loth to carry it out. Middleton's own letters to Hastings make it perfectly clear how reluctant he was to take such a step. Middleton himself hesitated to apply the pressure requisite to force him to sign the orders for resumption. Nothing but Hastings' imperious resolve and stringent commands compelled the unwilling Resident to goad on the wretched Nawab to the execution of this nefarious scheme. Middleton wrote to Hastings that in consequence of the resumption of all the jaghirs, so much against his inclination.. a settled melancholy has seized upon the Nawab, and his health is reduced beyond conception." Indeed, the orders for resumption were not issued by Asaf-ud-daulah, for he could not by any pressure be induced to sign them, but by Middleton himself, and were only enforced by a military demonstration. During the early days of 1782 the work of spoliation was carried out at Faizabad, by means of moral torture applied to the Begams themselves, and physical torture applied to their treasurers. The house, on the south bank of the Ghaghra, in which the disgraceful scene was enacted, is now known as the Commissariat bungalow. Haidar Beg Khan, the minister, according to Middleton's well-known letter to Sir Elijah Impey, "supported him nobly" in his arduous task of terrifying two secluded old native ladies and a couple of aged eunuchs. Seventy-six lakhs (£760,000) were extorted, and all the jaghirs resumed, but of the latter a great part was subsequently restored, and held by the Bahu Begam until her death, at a very advanced age, in 1815. To have their village included in the Begam's jaghir was about the greatest stroke of good fortune that could befall the inhabitants thereof, for they thus obtained protection from the extortions of the revenue farmers and other leeches who harassed and drained the greater part of Oudh.

Faizullah Khan, the Rohilla Nawab of Rampur, who had been spared by Shuja-ud-daulah, was another of the victims of the tyrannous necessity under which Hastings laboured of filling the Company's treasury. He was bound by treaty not to maintain more than five thousand troops, of whom three thousand were to be furnished to the Nawab of Oudh on demand. In November 1780, Hastings ordered the Nawab to call on Faizullah Khan for five thousand troops for the defence of Behar. The unhappy man promptly and humbly offered three thousand. For this meek refusal to comply with an unwarrantable demand, Hastings assented to the annexation of all his estates to Oudh, and he was only restored on payment of fifteen lakhs (£150,000), a sum equal to his whole annual income. For three years after the spoliation of the Begams, Oudh was under the merciless screw of Haidar Beg Khan, acting under the imperious menaces of the Governor-General. But the patient could not be made to bleed freely enough.

Finally, after the failure of his own nominees, Middleton and Palmer, Hastings fell back on Bristow, on whom he bestowed almost unlimited powers. Better proof could hardly be found of the depth of shameless meanness to which, with all his great qualities, Hastings was capable of descending, than a comparison of the private instructions which he gave to Bristow, and his subsequent public condemnation of Bristow's conduct in carrying them out. The instructions ran thus:—The Resident must be the slave and vassal of the Minister, or the Minister at the absolute devotion (*sic*) of the Resident....It will be necessary to declare to him (the Minister) in the plainest terms, the footing and conditions on which he shall be permitted to retain his place, with the alternative of dismission, and a scrutiny into his past conduct, if he refuses." Little more than a year later, Bristow was for the third time removed from Lucknow by the Governor-General on the publicly recorded ground that he, "after an ineffectual attempt to draw the minister Haidar Beg Khan into a conspiracy with him to usurp all the powers of the Government, proceeded to an open assumption of them to himself."

Really, if his treatment of Oudh had been a fair sample of the whole of Hastings' Indian career, it would hardly be too much to say that no whit of Burke's invective could have been excessive or exaggerated.

"Owing to the weakness of the Nawab's government," no troops were withdrawn as had been provided by the treaty of 1781, until a visit paid to Lucknow by Hastings in March 1784, when the province was relieved of a detachment. About the same time he caused the restoration of a part of the confiscated jaghirs, and altogether does not seem to have inflicted very much injury on Oudh upon this occasion. Indeed, the state of the country was sufficiently deplorable to have excited even his compassion, and was in every respect worse than it had been under Shuja'-ud-daulah. Hastings himself, in a minute writen at Calcutta in May 1784, previous to his visiting Lucknow, admits that the province "had fallen into a state of great disorder and confusion, its resources being in an extraordinary degree diminished"; and expresses a hope that he "may possibly be able to establish some plan by which the province of Oudh may be in time restored to its former state of affluence, good order, and prosperity." How utterly demoralised its actual condition was may be gathered from the following account by Bristow, written in December 1782 :—

"Despotism is the principle upon which every measure is founded, and the people in the interior parts of the country are ruled at the discretion of the Amil or Faujdar for the time being; they exercise, within the limits of their jurisdiction, the powers of life and death, and decisions in civil and other cases, in the same extent as the Sovereign at the capital. The forms prescribed by the ancient institutions of the Mughal Empire are unattended to, and the will of the provincial magistrate is the sole law of the people; the total relaxation of the Wazir's authority, his inattention and dislike to business, leave the Amils in possession of this dangerous power.... I can hardly quote an instance, since the Wazir's accession to the *masnad*, of an Amil having been punished for oppression, though the complaints of the people and the state of the country are notorious proofs of the violences daily committed; it is even become unsafe for travellers to pass except in large bodies; murders, thefts, and other enormities shocking to humanity are committed in open day."

He adds that Amils were selected solely by favour, or capacity to pay a large sum in advance, and "entered upon their trust ruined in reputation" and pocket. They bullied the weaker zamindars, and were cowed in their turn by the more powerful, whose forts covered the country; Almas Ali Khan, the famous eunuch, who for many years farmed the south-east portion of Oudh, having—though this estimate must have been greatly exaggerated—"not less than seven hundred in his districts." It was customary for an Amil to keep some near relative of each zamindar as a hostage; "a great Amil will sometimes have three or four hundred of these hostages, whom he is obliged to confine in places of security."

Captain Edwards, who was examined as a witness at Hastings' trial, deposed that "in the general aspect that the country bore, and the cultivation of the country, it was infinitely better cultivated in 1774 than in 1783.... In Shuja'-ud-daulah's time the country was in a very flourishing state in merchandise, cultivation, and every article of commerce, and the people then seemed to be very happy under his government, which lately was not the case, because the country inreality, in the year 1774, appeared in a flourishing state, and in the year 1783 it appeared comparatively forlorn and desolate."

The main cause of the unhappy change, described with such curious infelicity of phrase, is not far to seek. An Asiatic, or, indeed, any ruler, when the slave of a powerful external Government, whose only object is to get money from him, and which, so long as that object is attained, guarantees him against the results of his own oppression and misrule, is tolerably certain to lose interest in his affairs, to "let things slide," and to seek refuge in sensual pleasure. This was the course of every Nawab or King of Oudh from Asaf-ud-daulah onwards, with the two exceptions of S'adat Ali, and his son Muhammad Ali Shah, of whom the first was a man of extraordinary natural force of character, and the second was favoured by the good early training he had received from his father, the quiet and decorous life he had led for many years previous to his accession to the throne, and an exceptionally good Resident, Colonel Low. The result must almost inevitably be a total collapse of administration, and particularly of land revenue administration; a tendency to shirk the trouble of supervising a large number of small landholders, and to hand them all over in a mass to the first large revenue farmer or powerful official who will pay, or undertake to pay, heavily for the privilege of plundering them at discretion. This was what was done by Asaf-ud-daulah, and the growth of "mushroom" Taluqdars began during his reign, owing chiefly to the tremendous drain upon the resources of Oudh established by the Calcutta Council under Hastings, and continued with but little actual, though with some nominal, diminution under his immediate successors.

The first of these was Lord Cornwallis, and to him, in 1786, the Nawab addressed an entreaty that his burthens might be lightened by the withdrawal of the troops from Fattihgarh and Cawnpore. This request was refused, on the ground that it could not safely be complied with. Negotiations between Lord Cornwallis and Haidar Beg Khan went on for some months, and on the 15th of April 1787 the Governor-General wrote a letter to the Nawab, pointing out the superiority of the British troops to his own, and reminding him that their pay was expended in Oudh, which had enjoyed peace—such as it was—while the rest of India was disturbed. He promised, however, that future demands should not exceed the expenses actually incurred by the Company in their relations with the province, which amounted to "fifty lakhs of Faizabad rupees." The force was to be increased or decreased hereafter as circumstances required, and the Resident was no longer to interfere in the internal affairs of Oudh. "For several years past," wrote Lord Cornwallis, "the inhabitants of your Excellency's dominions, from motives of self-interest, have appealed to this Government, and this has been a source of injury to the affairs of your Government. I am determined to put a stop to this practice, and to disregard their applications; but, as the connection between the two governments is universally known, strict attention to justice on your part will add credit and renown to both."

The substance of this letter was discussed with Haidar Beg Khan, and on the 21st of July a florid reply was received from the Nawab, still dwelling on the great weight of expense which his Government had experienced every year from these troops, and on the negotiations which had passed with "former gentlemen" on this subject; but agreeing to the continuance of the troops "with a view to preserve his Lordship's goodwill and satisfaction," and to the annual payment of fifty lakhs. A portion of the balance due to the Company was remitted.

On the 25th of July 1788 a commercial treaty was signed, providing that neither party should claim any exemption for the goods of their respective subjects from duties which were to be levied at rates of two and a half to five per cent. on permits granted by the respective Governments. The exaction of transit duties by zamindars was forbidden, under penalties. The office of Governor-General's Agent was abolished, an economy of one hundred thousand pounds a year, which seem a somewhat high price for the province to have paid for the services rendered to her by Major Palmer and his establishment; the claims of private creditors of the Nawab were refused recognition; and sundry monopolies which had been acquired by European adventurers under colour of the Company's authority were abolished. Altogether, Lord Cornwallis did a good deal in the way of pruning the most flagrant of the evil growths by which Oudh was being suffocated, and it is possible to study the history of our relations with the province during his term of office, whithout feeling any very overpowering sense of shame; which, considering the events of the previous decade, is comparatively at least, saying a good deal.

But as far as Asaf-ud-daulah was concerned, the mischief was done. Whether he might, under happier auspices, have turned out a respectable ruler, is of course an open question. His liberality and munificence are still proverbial in Lucknow, as is testified by the following slightly profane couplet, which the Banyas are wont to repeat on opening their shops in the morning :—

Jis ko na de Maula,
Tis ko de Asaf-ud-daulah;

which may be rendered,

Who from Heaven nought receiveth,
To him Asaf-ud-daulah giveth.

He spent money lavishly on public buildings, the principal of which were among the chief ornaments of Lucknow, such as the Daulat Khana, the Rumi Darwaza, Hasan Bagh, the Bibiapur Kothi, the Chinhat Kothi, the Bara Imambara, the Aish Bagh, the Char Bagh, and the Residency. The Martiniere College, also, was built during his reign by General Claude Martin, French officer in his service. But, whatever his potential good qualities, Asaf-ud-daulah had, by the time of Lord Cornwallis' Governor-Generalship, become utterly debauched and demoralised, and totally headless of his affairs, which, being left to themselves, naturally grew worse and worse. The revenue farmers, as they grew powerful by draining the country of its wealth, shook off their allegiance to the Nawab and defied his authority. Asaf-ud-daulah's own excuse for his reckless abandonment of business was that he had been rendered desperate by the insatiable demands of the Calcutta Council, who, however divided on other points, could always unite in any scheme for the plunder of Oudh, and only differed occasionally as to the choice of agents—a Middleton or a Bristow for its execution.

Haidar Beg Khan died in 1795, and with him expired such little vitality as still lingered in the administration of the province. The finances were in a desperate condition when Sir John Shore, who succeeded Lord Cornwallis as Governor-General, visited Lucknow in 1797, and—by way of relieving them—established a fresh drain to five lakhs and a half, yearly, for the support of two additional regiments. In return for this concession, he bestowed "a sight of good advice" on Asaf-ud-daulah, which the latter was incapable of appreciating. It was not even stated that these extra troops were to be kept in Oudh at all, and the demand was made "in compliance with the Company's orders," owing to "the late very great increase in their military establishment." Poor Oudh ?

The only other result of Sir John Shore's visit was the appointment, as minister, of Tafazzul Hosen, who had been the Nawab's representative at Calcutta. He appears to have been an intelligent and respectable man; but the Nawab would have preferred Almas Ali Khan, and for once it is probable that the Nawab was right. Sleeman writes of him thus :—

"Miyan Almas was the greatest and best man of any note that Oudh has produced. He held for about forty years districts yielding to the Oudh Government an annual revenue of about eighty lakhs of rupees (£ 800,000). During all this time he kept the people secure in life and property, and as happy as people in such a state of society can be; and the whole country under his charge was, during his lifetime, a garden." He died a poor man, "for his immense income he had expended in useful works, liberal hospitality, and charity. He systematically kept in check the Taluqdars or great landholders; fostered the smaller; and encouraged and protected the best classes of cultivators, such as Lodhs, Kurmis, and Kachhis, whom he called and considered his children. His reign over the large extent of country under his jurisdiction is considered to have been its golden age."

Such was the man who was set aside in favour of the worthy, but comparatively insignificant Tafazzul Hosen. Sir John Shore had given his consent to the appointment of Almas Ali, but revoked it on discovering an old order by Lord Cornwallis against his being employed. Had this order not been passed, or not been discovered when it was, the subsequent course of Oudh history might have been materially different. For Asaf-ud-daulah died very shortly after Sir John Shore left Lucknow, and it was mainly owing to the representations of Tafazzul Hosen that his putative son and successor, Wazir Ali, was set aside after a few weeks in favour of S'adat Ali, second son of Shuja-ud-daulah, and brother of the late Nawab.

The news of Asaf-ud-daulah's death reached Sir John Shore at Calcutta, and he ratified the succession of Wazir Ali, reputed son of the late Nawab. But reports soon came in space of his illegitimacy, profligacy, and hostility to English interests, and the Governor-General again set out for Lucknow to dispose of the matter on the spot. He was met on the way by Tafazzul Hosen, who was full of Wazir Ali's transgressions and enormities, and whose zeal for his deposition was, perhaps, partly due to the fact that he had formerly been tutor to S'adat Ali, in whose sight he hoped to find more favour than in that of the violent and intractable young Nawab.

Sir Henry Lawrence felt "bound to record his opinion that Wazir Ali was unjustly treated," and that his "spurious birth would not by Muhammadan law have interfered with his succession, and never would have weighed with the English authorities, had he not rendered himself obnoxious to them by desiring to degrade Tafazzul Hosen, who was considered as 'the representative of English influence.' " Mr. Eastwick follows suit, and writes that Wazir Ali was deprived of a kingdom upon evidence on which "a court of English law would not have decided against him a question of a few pounds."

To us it seems that the question of Wazir Ali's legitimacy or illegitimacy was one of very secondary importance, and that Sir John Shore was perfectly justified in taking into consideration his anti-English leanings as a part of the larger question of his general fitness or unfitness to rule the province. That he should have bitterly disliked all things English is not surprising, considering what he had seen of English influence in Oudh, and was certainly not to be imputed to him as a moral failing. Still, the fact remained that Oudh *was* under English influence, and was obviously destined so to continue, and Wazir Ali's hostility to that influence was, so far, a disqualification for the task of presiding over the affairs of a province that was subject to it. In other respects, moreover, there was no room for doubt that he was totally unfit to govern, and, indeed, as his subsequent conduct showed, hardly fit to live. However, English influence over Oudh had been acquired, it was an existing fact, and Sir John Shore, being in possession of it, was bound to use it for the best interests of the province. That he did so use it in setting aside Wazir Ali and substituting S'adat Ali, the subsequent career of the latter leaves as little doubt as the terms of the treaty, which Sir John Shore exacted from him, as a condition precedent of his elevation, leave that his motives in making the selection were not unmixed.

Since he had fled from Oudh, as already mentioned, in fear of the consequences of Khwajah Basant's unsuccessful conspiracy, S'adat Ali had been living in British territory, and was at this time at Banaras. It was there that the intention of raising him to the *masnad* was announced to him by the Resident, Mr. Cherry, and a draft treaty presented to him for his acceptance, the substance of which may be summarised as follows :—

(1) The subsidy to the Company was to be raised from fifty-six to seventy-six lakhs *per annum*, payable by monthly instalments of Rs. 6,33,333-5-4, commencing from the date of his accession (which took place on the 21st of January 1798); the arrears of the subsidy were to be at once discharged; a yearly allowance of a lakh and half was to be paid to Wazir Ali through the Resident; and twelve lakhs were to be paid at once as *nazarana*, or douceur, to the Company, who had "incurred a considerable expense in their exertions in establishing his right."

(2) In the event of the instalments falling into arrears, such security was to be given as should be deemed satisfactory, and "since by this treaty the amount of the subsidy is considerably increased, and many other permanent charges upon His Excellency are incurred ... it becomes necessary, on a comparison of his disbursements with the assets of his country," to make reductions in expenditure; and S'adat Ali agreed to act to that end in consultation with the Company.

(3) No correspondence with foreign powers was to be carried on by the Nawab without the knowledge and concurrence of the English Government; and he was to entertain no Europeans without its sanction.

(4) The commercial treaty of the 25th of July, 1788, which had been hitherto neglected, was to be duly enforced for the future.

(5) The reputed children of Asaf-ud-daulah were to be maintained by S'adat Ali.

(6) The fort of Allahabad was to be made over to the Company, with the sum of eight lakhs to be spent on its fortifications—The Company, be it observed, paying *ghat*-fees—and three lakhs were to be made over to them for strengthening the fortifications of Fattihgarh.

(7) In return, the Company agreed to maintain not less than ten thousand troops in Oudh. If at any time the force amounted to more than thirteen thousand, or less than eight thousand, an increased subsidy was to be paid, or a decrease allowed accordingly.

The treaty contained no provision for the good government of the province, and, except for the look of the thing, the omission was not, perhaps, under all the circumstances, of much consequence.

Such as it was, it was accepted by S'adat Ali, who was in no position to haggle about terms, and on the 21st of January 1798 he was proclaimed as Nawab Wazir at Lucknow, whither he had been escorted by British troops. The treaty was formally signed on the 21st of February. Wazir Ali had maintained a threatening attitude during the course of these negotiations, but no outbreak took place, owing, it is only fair to say, in great measure to Sir John Shore's perfect coolness and tact, for which he was publicly thanked by the Court of Directors. One can only wish that the success of the cause in which these fine qualities were displayed had been signalised by the conclusion of a somewhat less one-sided treaty. A great *darbar* of all Lucknow Court was held at the Bibiapur palace, at which Wazir Ali was informed of the order for his deposition, and sent off to Banaras under esoort. With his subsequent adventures, culminating in the assassination of the Banaras Resident, Mr. Cherry, Oudh history has little further concern.

S'adat Ali inherited from his father Shuja'-ud-daulah both his taste for pleasure and his business capacity, but in him the latter was far more marked and developed, and the former less so. His character seems to have been very generally misunderstood, and it was a character worth understanding rightly, for there was a great deal of it. He was about forty years of age when raised to the *masnad*, and had previously been known as jovial spirit, fond of wine and hunting, but at the same time, prudent and economical. From that time forward, however, he was a changed man. He deeply felt his responsibilities, and struggled gallantly against the difficulties of his position to fulfil his duty to the province. His conduct was often misconstrued by those who imperfectly comprehended his situation and the needs of the country. But the people of Oudh, at least, appreciated him, and he is still remembered, even by the large landholders—whom to keep in check was one of the chief aims of his policy—as the best, wisest, and strongest administrator that the province has ever known. He underwent, in fact, "conversion," and solemnly vowed at the shrine of Hazrat Abbas to abandon his life of pleasure, and to devote himself to the task of government; and this vow he certainly kept to the end of his life.

But his circumstances, especially at first, were most unfavourable. The treaty which he had signed bound him to pay more than three-quarters of a million annually for the use of ten thousand of the Company's troops. This he seems to have done without fail, for the treaty forced upon him in 1801 contains no mention of any arrears. But he had also to contend against the earth-hunger of Lord Wellesley, who reached India shortly after his accession, stimulated by apprehensions, which for a period of about ten months were probably genuine enough, of an invasion of northern India by Zaman Shah, son of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the redoubted victor of Panipat. Lord Wellesley began by calling on S'adat Ali to disband a great part of his own troops, of whom Asaf-ud-daulah had left some eighty thousand, and to substitute for them an increased British force. This proposal was very distasteful to S'adat Ali, but objections were useless against the master of many legions and few scruples, the robust vigour of whose policy ran little risk of being weakened by any excess of urbanity in his mode of expressing it. The Nawab at last threw out a hint of abdicating, at which Lord Wellesley eagerly caught, assuming as a matter of course that his abdication would be in favour of the Company. This however, was by no means S'adat Ali's intention, and he refused to resign unless he was to be succeeded by one of his owns sons. The Governor-General put on record some very strong language concerning the "duplicity and insincerity" of the Nawab, but the latter would not yield and Lord Wellesley was not prepared forcibly to depose him without some better pretext what he had yet been able to obtain. For the charge of duplicity there was really no foundation, for the Resident, in his letter describing the interview at which the proposal to abdicate was made, expressly states that the Nawab dwelt on the fact that his son would succeed him, and the dignity be continued in his family. Yet Lord Wellesley's reply to this letter was accompanied by a draft treaty for the Nawab's acceptance, in which no mention whatever was made of his children except as recipients of a pension, and by which the entire civil and military administration of Oudh was to vest in the Company It was not suprising that S'adat Ali refused his consent to a proposal which, he declared to the Resident, "would bring upon him such indelible disgrace and odium that he could never voluntarily subscribe to it." It is impossible to read the correspondence which ensued between Lord Wellesley and the Nawab without feeling that the latter had very much the best of the argument, as a mere question of fairness and reason. The Governor-General appeared to have convinced himself that S'adat Ali was incapable of doing any good thing whatsoever; and if that conviction had been correct, he would surely have been justified in relieving Oudh of him, always providing that he was prepared to substitute a better government than that which he removed. But where Lord Wellesley seems to have been wrong, was in his axiom of S'adat Ali's worthlessness. He had before him, perhaps the ablest and most enlightened native ruler then living, and failed to recognise him.

Vanquished in argument, Lord Wellesley threw his sword into the scale. A British force marched into Oudh, without the consent of the Nawab, whose local officers were ordered by the Resident to receive it, and supply provisions for its use. This order they obeyed. The Nawab's troops were vastly reduced, an invidious task which was well carried out by Colonel Scott, and twelve battalions of the Company's infantry and four regiments of cavalry substituted, at an additional cost to the Oudh exchequer of fifty-four lakhs annually. The total amount of the subsidy was thus increased to £1,300,000, while to balance this greatly augmented demand there was a saving of only £165,000, effected by the reduction of a great part of the Oudh troops. The Nawab, not very unnaturally, wrote to the Resident, dwelling on the difficulty of meeting this enhanced charge, and asking where the money was to come from. Lord Wellesley promptly declared that this was a confession of inability to satisfy the Company's demands, that the subsidy was no longer safe, and that it must be secured by the cession of "such a portion of the Wazir's territories as shall be fully adequate, in their present impoverished condition, to defray those indispensable charges," or, in other words, of rather more than half of the whole of his dominions. It was in vain that S'adat Ali explained that he had merely wished to ask for the advice of the Resident, which he had been enjoined to take, and had frankly put his perplexities before him; and pointed out the regularity with which the subsidy had hitherto been paid. Lord Wellesley deputed his brother Henry Wellesley to Lucknow, and under threat of complete deposition, the treaty of the 10th of November 1801 was extorted, by which Rohilkhand, Farukhabad, Mainpuri, Etawah, Cawnpore, Fattihgarh, Allahabad, Azimgarh, Basti, and Gorakhpur, were ceded to the Company in perpetuity.

The revenue then yielded by these districts amounted to Rs. 1,35,00,000 which, including stamps and excise, had risen in 1846-47 to more than Rs. 2,11,00,000. It is now considerably over Rs. 3,00,00,000. The principle of which the districts to be ceded were chosen was to isolate the remaining dominions of the Nawab by surrounding them on three sides with a ring of British territory, while to the north, as before, they were shut in by the mountains of Naipal. Henceforward, with one or two trifling exchanges, the dimensions of the province continued as at present. The other provisions of the treaty were that the subsidy should cease for ever, and that no future charges should be made for the protection of Oudh. The Nawab to retain only four battalions of infantry, one regiment of Najibs, two thousand cavalry, and three hundred artillerymen. Possession of the reserved dominions was guaranteed to him and to "his heirs and successors," as also full exercise of authority within the same, and the Nawab engaged to introduce a good system of administration, in concert with the Company's officers. The ceded districts were to be made over at the commencement of the year 1209 Fasli = 22nd of September 1801, though the treaty was not actually signed till the 10th of Nov. and the subsidy was to be continued until actual possession was obtained. The navigation of the Ganges and other boundary rivers was declared free.

And here, perhaps, it may not be inappropriate to point out, in some little detail, the changes which have taken place from time to time in the extension of the term Oudh.

Mr. Carnegy, on the authority of Sir Man Singh, informs us that the old pre-historic Awadh, the kingdom of Rama, contained five main divisions, viz —

(1) Uttara Kosala, or the trans-Ghaghra districts, now known as Bahraich, Gonda, Basti, and Gorakhpur.

(2) Silliana, or Saliana, consisting of the lower range of hills to the north of Uttara Kosala, as above defined, now belonging to Naipal, with the Tarai at its base.

(3) Pachhimrath, which may be roughly described as the country between the Ghaghra and the Gumti, bounded on the east by a line drawn from Ajodhya on the former river to Sultanpur on the latter, and on the west by a line drawn through Nimkhar in the Sitapur district so as to connect the same two rivers considerably nearer their sources. This division must have included about a

third of the present district of Faizabad, a small portion of the north of Sultanpur, greater part of Barabanki, and sections of the Lucknow and Sitapur districts.

(4) Purabrath, or the country between the Ghaghra and the Gumti east of the line from Ajodhya to Sultanpur, including two-thirds of the modern Faizabad district, the north-eastern corner of Sultanpur, and parts of Azamgarh and Jaunpur. How far it extended eastwards, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine with any precision.

(5) Arbar, or the country about Pratabgarh, extending southwards from the Gumti to the Sai river. Arbar, it may be noticed, is still the local name of the large pargana and tahsil of Pratabgarh.

From the pre-historic period to the time of Akbar, the limits of the province and its internal divisions seem to have been constantly changing, and the name of Oudh, or Awadh, seems to have been applicable only to one of these divisions or *Sarkars*, nearly corresponding to the old Pachhimrath. The title of Subahdar of Oudh is mentioned as early as 1280 A. D., but it can only have denoted the governor of the tract of country above defined. The Oudh of Akbar was one of the twelve (or fifteen) subahs into which he divided the Mughal Empire as it then stood, in the year 1590 A. D. As constituted at the end of the sixteenth century, the Subah contained five Sarkars, viz. Awadh, Lucknow, Bahraich, Khairabad, and Gorakhpur, and these, again, were subdivided into numerous *mahals* and *dasturs*. It seems to have been of nearly the same extent as the present province, and to have differed only in including Gorakhpur, Basti, and Azimgarh, and in excluding Tanda, Aldemau, and Manikpur, or the territory to the east and south of Faizabad, Sultanpur, and Pratabgarh

The wars and transactions in which Shuja-ud-daulah was engaged, both with and against the East India Company, led to the addition of Karra, Allahabad, Fattihgarh, Cawnpore, Etawah, Mainpuri, Farukhabad, and Rohilkhand, to the Oudh dominions, and thus they remained until the treaty of 1801 with S'adat Ali, by which the province was reduced to its present dimensions. Since then, only a few slight alterations of frontier have taken place. Khairigarh, Kanchanpur, and what is now the Naipal Tarai, were ceded in 1816, in liquidation of Ghazi-ud-din Haidar's loan of a million sterling towards the expenses of the Naipal war ; and at the same time the pargana of Nawabganj was added to the Gonda district, in exchange for that of Handia, or Kawai, which was transferred from Pratabgarh to Allahabad, The Tarai to the north of Bahraich, including a large quantity of valuable forest and grazing ground, was made over to the Naipal Darbar in 1860, in recognition of their services during the Mutiny, and in 1874 some further cessions, on a much smaller scale, but without any apparent reason, were made in favour of the same Government. Except then for about thirty years during which it included Shuja'-ud-daulah's acquisitions, the limits of the province have not differed very materially from the time of Akbar to the present day.

By the treaty of 1801, S'adat Ali found himself left, after three years of trouble and humiliation, with half the dominions he had inherited, but with no subsidy to pay, an efficient military force, and comparatively little vexatious interference to contend against. For the remaining twelve years of his life, he devoted himself to the task of administration. His chief difficulties were due to the turbulence of the large landholders, whether Rajput chiefs or successful revenue farmers, of which latter class a plentiful crop had, as before mentioned, sprung up in the time of Asaf-ud-daulah. He was perfectly aware, as Almas Ali had been before him, that the province could only be governed as an organic whole by keeping a strong hand on the large Taluqdars, and he was fully determined to crush all lawless recusants. For this purpose it was necessary to use freely the troops at his disposal. This process was highly distasteful to the English officers in command, who called it "collecting taxes at the point of the bayonet," a phrase which sounds dreadful enough, but really only describes what was, under the circumstances, an inevitable operation. Sympathising, like most Englishmen of their class, with a turbulent landed aristocracy as against a central government, they threw as many obstacles as possible in the way of carrying out the work of suppression; and S'adat Ali complained bitterly that after having given away half his kingdom for the use of the Company's troops, he was subjected to humiliating remonstrances from commanding officers whenever he asked for their assistance in putting down refractory and recusant landholders. However, inspite of all obstacles, the work was thoroughly done for the time and the authority of the Government maintained

S'adat Ali resumed many of the rent-free grants which had been capriciously lavished by Asaf-ud-daulah, and a good deal of taluqdari *nankar*. "He upheld," writes Colonel McAndrew, "the Government right to the whole assessment, which was *mauzahwar* (*i.e.* imposed village by village, but not in the lump), making an allowance for each *mauzah* called *dehi nankar*. Besides the *nankar*, which was originally allowed to the Malguzar (revenue payer) only, the proprietors enjoyed their *sir* land," up to 10 per cent of the cultivated area, at favourable rates. He abandoned the vicious *ijarah* system of getting in the revenue through irresponsible contractors, and adopted the *amani* or trust mode of management, *i.e.* instead of letting out a district in farm for a fixed sum to the highest bidder, leaving the latter to make what he could out of it, he required his collectors to account for their collections, without binding them to pay any fixed amount. That the latter system, if genuinely carried out, is far the best for the people, needs little demonstration. But to prevent embezzlement, strict supervision of the collectors was necessary. And that supervision S'adat Ali bestowed. Constant reports of the proceedings of every *chakladar* (collector of a *chakla* or circle) were submitted by the news-writers appointed for the purpose, and he himself constantly tested the correctness of these reports by personal local inspection. "The result of his administration," again to quote Colonel McAndrew, "was that the people became contented and prosperous, much waste land was broken up, and a very general conversion of rents in kind into rents in money took place in the more populous parts of the province ... At his death S'adat Ali left behind him the name of the friend of the ryot, and a full treasury."

He has been accused of undue parsimony, a charge which any successor of the lavish Asaf-ud-dualah could hardly escape. S'adat Ali was certainly not a man to throw away money, or even to spend it without getting the money's worth. But on fitting occasions he could be liberal enough, as witness the long list of public buildings which he erected, and especially the Dilaram, Dilkhusha, Musa Bagh, Haiyat Baksh and Nur Baksh Kothis, the Khas Bazar, and the Dargah of Hazrat Abbas Ali.

Colonel Sleeman, who travelled through Oudh when it was still comparatively a *terre vierge*, and who probably knew more of the province as it was under native rule than any other Englishman, writes of S'adat Ali that he was "a man of great general ability, had mixed much in the society of British officers in various parts of British India, had been well trained in habits of business, understood thoroughly the character, institutions, and requirements of his people, and above all, was a sound judge of the relative merits and capacities of the men from whom he had to select his officers and a vigilant supervisor of their actions ... Men who served him ably and honestly always left confident in his protection and support. He had a thorough knowledge of the rights and duties of his subjects and officers, and a strong will to secure the one and enforce the other. To do this, he knew that he must with a strong hand keep down the large landed aristocracy, who were then, as they are now (1850) very prone to grasp at the possessions of their weaker neighbours, either by force, or in collusion with local authorities. In attempting this with the aid of British troops, some acts of oppression were, no doubt, committed and as the sympathies of the British officers were more with the landed aristocracy, while his were more with the humble classes of landholders and cultivators, who required to be protected from them. frequent misunderstandings arose—acts of just severity were made to appear to be acts of wanton oppression, and such as were really oppressive were exaggerated into unheard-of atrocities " He would not tolerate peculation, and did not hesitate to make a detected peculator disgorge, but "he never confiscated the estates of any good and faithful servants who left lawful heirs to their property." An honest and able officer might count confidently on being maintained in his position, and had no need to make haste to be rich *e.g.* Hakim Mehndi at Muhamdi, and Balki Das and his son Rai Amr Singh at Bahraich, were continued in office for many years consecutively, and made their respective districts like gardens.

Such was the Nawab S'adat Ali, whom Lord Wellesley had wished to set aside as incapable.

He died in 1814, leaving a treasure which is variously stated at three, and at fourteen, millions sterling. The former estimate is probably a good deal below, and the latter a good deal above, the mark. His yearly income during the last twelve years of his reign probably never exceeded million and a half sterling, and it is not impossible that he may have put by half that sum annually. The rent (revenue) of good land in his time according to Dr. Butter's Report on the southern districts of Oudh, written in 1837, was from one to one and a half rupees per (standard) bigha. "Now," he adds, "the assessment is two, three, or four rupees per bigha, and can seldom be fully levied without ruin both to ryot and zamindar." Though the revenue demand was so much lower under S'adat Ali's *regime* than under that of his successors, it is probable that he actually received considerably more than they did, the costs of collection and the amount intercepted by officials being much smaller than they became later.

Shams-ud-daulah, eldest son of S'adat Ali, had died before him and his children were therefore excluded from inheritance under the rule of Mahammadan law known as Mahjub-ul-irs, in favour of the second son, Ghazi-ud-din Haidar. The latter had never been on good terms with his father, and had been left much in the hands of servants. One of these, Agha Mir, otherwise known as Muhtamad-ud-daulah, who had been his *khansaman*, was made minister, in supersession of Hakim Mehndi, who had been S'adat Ali's right-hand man for several years before the latter's death. The cause of his fall was that he strongly objected to the interference of Colonel Baillie, the then Resident, and induced the Nawab to remonstrate against it to the Governor-General. Ghazi-ud-din, however, became frightened at the notion of an open rupture with the Resident, and backed out of his remonstrance, pleading that he had been misled and misinformed by his minister, who was deprived of all his offices and much of his property, and was for a time imprisoned. On his relase he went into British territory, and in 1824 was living in magnificent style at Fattigarh. This, however, was not his final departure from the stage of Oudh politics, and he will be heard of again in the following reign. Agha Mir plundered his master in almost every possible way, and is said to have appropriated half a million sterling which was entrusted to him for expenditure on public works.

It was not long before the Calcutta Government, then presided over by Lord Moira—who afterwards became Lord Hastings—began to tap the treasure which had been left by S'adat Ali. In 1814 a million was borrowed for the Naipal war, at six per cent., the Resident being instructed to "make it appear as a voluntary offer on the part of the Nawab." A second million was borrowed in the following year, but this debt was liquidated in 1816 by the cession of Khairigarh and the strip of Tarai country under the Naipal hills, extending from the Koriala on the west, to the border of Gorakhpur on the east. Mr. Eastwick represents this cession as a very doubtful benefit, and says that the Tarai became a stronghold for all the rebels and banditti of eastern Oudh. But it must in fact, have very considerably strenthened the Oudh Government, and led to the suppression of the Banjaras and other hill tribes who had long been a thorn in the north side of the province. In addition to his money loan, it should be added, Ghazi-ud-din had furnished a fully equipped regiment of cavalry at his own expense, and supplied a large number of elephants which did very good service, and many of which he never saw again. These loans were not negotiated without a good deal of discreditable intrigue, in which the Residency Munshi seems to have duped both the Resident and the Nawab, and all further interference in the affairs of the latter was peremptorily forbidden by the Governor-General. The prohibition, however, had been uttered before, and was destined to be uttered again.

In 1819 it struck Lord Hastings that Ghazi-ud-din, if created a king, would be a useful counterpoise to the Emperor of Delhi. He accordingly induced him to coin money in his own name, and to assume the title of Shah. This was perhaps the most sterile stroke of the sterile science of diplomacy that was ever conceived or executed. The title never took much root out of Lucknow, and though Ghazi-ud-din and his four successors were all titular kings, their rule is far more commonly spoken of by the country folk as the "Nawabi" than as the "Shahi."

We get an interesting glimpse of Oudh as it was in 1824 from Bishop Heber's journal. He entered the province from Cawnpore in October of that year, and went straight to Lucknow. He found the peasantry universally armed, and at Newalganj a body of them were besieging some of the King's troops who were escorting Rs. 30,000 of treasure to Lucknow. Warlike though they were, however, he found a crowd which was collected round a dying elephant of the King's, "civil and communicative," and saw, to his surprise, that the whole country between Cawnpore and Lucknow, with the exception of occasional barren wastes, was under cultivation. He had heard much before entering Oudh of the hatred of the English name which prevailed in Lucknow, but of this he himself, though he went about the city almost wholly unattended, could see nothing. He was politely entertained by the King, who asked him to breakfast, and whom he describes as a tall, long-backed man, who "had evidently been very handsome," and whose features were still good and his countenance pleasing.

His manners were gentlemanly and elegant. He was well versed in Oriental philosophy and philology, had a taste for mechanics, and had, when younger, been fond of hunting He was popular with the few who had access to him, and was never accused of any personal violence or oppression, but was averse to public business, and quite in the hands of his minister, the ex-*khansaman*, Agha Mir. The latter is described as "a dark, harsh-looking, hawk-nosed man, with an expression of mouth which seems to imply habitual self-command struggling with a naturally rough temper.... and exceedingly unpopular."

The Bishop, on leaving Lucknow, marched to Shahjahanpur through what is now the Hardui district On the whole, he thought the anarchy and distress of Oudh over-rated. He saw no mud forts of stockades, and the people whom he met with north of Lucknow were not so universally armed as those to the south. Between Lucknow and Sandi he found the country "as populous and well-cultivated as most of the Company's territories." Things, he was told, had improved somewhat since the aid of our troops was withheld from the King's officers. This, of course, was just the kind of thing he was likely to hear in Lucknow. He, however, "could not help observing that there really is a greater appearance of ease, security, and neatness among the middling and lower classes of the Company's subjects than among those of the King of Oudh."

As a fact, there was probably a good deal more wealth in Oudh at that time than in our own surrounding districts, taxation being lighter, and being expended inside the province. But the reputation of possessing it was too dangerous to admit of much exhibition of its outward and visible signs, such as handsome clothes or elaborate houses.

The *amani* system of revenue collection, which S'adat Ali had worked so successfully, soon fell into disuse under his son. It required close supervision, which Ghazi-ud-din Haidar had neither the will nor the power to bestow. The *ijarah*, or farming system, soon revived, with all its attendant abuses. The Taluqdars again began to assert themselves, and to make head against the local officials, who, being unable to exact the full revenue demand from the large landholders, tried to make up the deficiency by piling it on the small zamindars and coparceners. These latter soon fell into arrears under the increased pressure put upon them, and were then in many cases handed over to the nearest Taluqdar who would undertake to pay the sum demanded, but who had generally no intention of paying it for more than a year or two, and was willing to submit to a temporary loss on the chance of ultimately evading or obtaining a reduction of the demand. The zamindars in such cases generally retained their *sir*, and sometimes their *dehi nankar* as well; but there was a constant struggle, conducted in a spirit of watchful jealousy, going on between them and the Taluqdar, and their best chance of keeping their heads above water lay in being always ready to resist his encroachments. If, again, an open rupture took place between a Taluqdar and a Nazim or a Chakladar, and the latter, with the aid of the King's troops drove out the former, the ejected party considered himself in a state of war with the Government, took to the jungles, and thought nothing of laying waste his own estate and harrying any tenants who presumed to cultivate it, until by his exhaustive process he compelled the Nazim to restore him to possession. The state of things, in short, set in which lasted, with perhaps one short interval, for the forty-two years between the death of S'adat Ali in 1814 and the deposition of Wajid Ali in 1856, and which was in full vigour and development when we annexed the province in the latter year. The short interval above alluded to was during the reign of Muhammad Ali Shah, 1837-1842.

The cause of all this miserable imbroglio was the utter absence of anything worthy the name of revenue administration, and of any sufficient control over the turbulent landholding classes, and more especially over the large Taluqdars. The coparcenary bodies were lawless enough, but they seldom openly resisted the Government officers, except when rallied for the purpose by a Taluqdar in support of his own interest. This cause, indeed, was in full working for some eighty years, from the time of Asaf-ud-daulah onwards, with the exception already mentioned, during the reign of Muhammad Ali Shah, and, much more markedly, during the twelve years from 1802 to 1814, when the indefatigable industry, clear perception, and great business powers of S'adat Ali turned the tide for a time. It is not strange that both before and after that period the revenue had a constant tendency to fall off. It was only the large treasure left by S'adat Ali which enabled his successors to carry on so long as they did. The difficulties which had been made about granting the aid of the Company's troops during his reign, to suppress local disorders and to enforce payment of revenue, much increased, and were, indeed, for more reasonable, in the time of Ghazi-ud-din Haidar. The Resident insisted, and the King and Minister admitted, that he had a right to be satisfied of the justice of the claim which he was asked to enforce by military aid. But the Resident was not in a position to hear both sides fairly, he being at Lucknow, and the defaulter, perhaps, in a jungle fort; and commanding officers had neither opportunity nor, in most cases, the requisite knowledge to enable them to arrive at any sound opinion. As the *morale*, too, of the Oudh Government deteriorated, it found such scrutiny into the merits of its revenue demands grow more and more distasteful, and the Minister, Agha Mir, began to increase the King's troops to enable himself to dispense with the aid of the Company's. Towards the end of this reign, the treaty of 1801 to the contrary notwithstanding, the Oudh force amounted to over sixty thousand men, of whom twenty thousand were regulars, and the rest undisciplined *Najibs*, who "found themselves" in their equipments. To do the British Government justice, it should be said that at this time they were really willing and anxious to support the King's authority so far as they justifiably could. In November 1824 Lord Amherst wrote to the Resident that our troops were to be "actively and energetically employed in the Oudh territory in cases of real internal commotion and disturbance." In July 1825 the Resident, Mr. Ricketts, was censured for not sufficiently carrying out these orders, and informed that the Governor-General was "sincerely disposed to maintain the rights of the King of Oudh to the fullest extent," as guaranteed by the treaty of 1801. It was added, however, that the British Government was "clearly entitled, as well as morally obliged, to satisfy itself, by whatever means it may deem necessary, that the aid of its troops is required in support of right and justice, and not to effectuate injustice and oppression." This rider practically cancelled the preceding declaration in something like four cases out of five in which the aid in question was likely to be demanded. For, however mischievous might be the turbulence of Taluqdars, the Oudh Government was pretty sure to have contrived by its mismanagement to put itself as much in the wrong as its rebellious subjects.

Ghazi-ud-din Haidar died on the 20th of October 1827. He had lent to the Company three millions and a half out of his father's treasure. It was during his reign that the system was begun of making the interest on these loans payable in perpetuity to the King's nominees, who were guaranteed the protection of the British Government. It led to great abuses, and created a class of pensioners who were constantly arraying themselves against the King's authority under cover of that of the Resident. The character of the King may be sufficiently gathered from this brief account of his reign. He was not an ill-disposed man, and, at the time of his accession, was inclined to spend his father's accumulation freely on public works. But his want of business habits prevented the money from being properly applied, and he does not seem to have been judiciously treated by the then Resident, Colonel Baillie. He soon sank into a life of voluptuous indulgence, and never emerged from it. He had, indeed, little motive to exertion. He had no lack of money; his position on the throne was secured by the presence of the Company's troops; and he was totally without the strenuous force of character and love of hard work for its own sake which were so conspicuous in his father. Perhaps the best that can be said of him is that he filled the post of *roi faineant* not ungracefully, and was never personally guilty of any barbarity or outrage. But

> *" 'Tis not mildness of the man that rules*
> *Makes the mild regimen,"*

and so the people of Oudh found to their cost during the reign of Ghazi-ud-din Haidar.

Nasir-ud-din Haidar, son of Ghazi-ud-din, the seventh Nawab, differed from his father mainly in being considerably more debauched and disreputable. The father had been an outwardly decent hedonist and voluptuary, but the son was under no restraints of any sort or kind, and it is probable that his character was not unfaithfully depicted in that highly coloured sketch, the "Private Life of an Eastern King." "Any one," we are told, "was his friend who would drink with him," and "his whole reign was one continued satire upon the subsidiary and protected system." He inherited from his father the valuable services of that accomplished swindler Agha Mir, and almost the only mark of good sense which he envinced during his reign was to discharge him, and attempt to make him disgorge his ill-gotten gains. The ex-minister, however, contrived to evade this drastic process under cover of British protection, and, taking up his abode at Cawnpore, started a printing press for the dissemination of attacks on the government which he had so long maladministered. His son was an intimate of the Nana Sahib, and took an active part under him in the Mutiny.

Agha Mir was succeeded by one Fazl Ali, who shortly gave place to Mehndi Ali Khan, better known as Hakim Mehndi, who had, as already mentioned, been living at Fattihgarh since his banishment by Ghazi-ud-din. He had great administrative ability, and though far from scrupulous, was, for his time and surroundings, indifferent honest. His character, however, is believed to have been stained by one conspicuous crime. In 1817 he offered Ghazi-ud-din to pay a lakh of rupees more than Rai Amar Singh, manager of Bahraich, had paid for that district in the preceding year. His offer was accepted, and the contract made over to him. He and his brother went down to Bahraich, where they were met by the Rai. They solemnly swore that they would do him no injury, but after putting him off his guard by compliments in his skilful management, and getting all his papers from him, they had him strangled at night, in his tent, by a couple of Mughal troopers. His property, amounting, it is said, to fifteen or twenty lakhs of rupees, was seized by the Hakim, who reported at Lucknow that his victim had poisoned himself to escape rendition of accounts. But it so happened that one of the murderers, whose name was Babu Beg, had, in the struggle, thrust one of his fingers into Amr Singh's mouth, who had bitten it off in his dying agony. And there it was found by the dead man's relatives when they came to perform the funeral ceremonies, one of which consists of putting a sprig of *tulsi*, or holy basil, into the mouth of the corpse. Then the whole story came out, and Agha Mir, who was at that time the Hakim's rival in the King's favour, was eager to have him tried for the crime. But

> *"oft 'tis seen*
> *The wicked prize itself buys out the Law,"*

and judiciously-applied bribery having silenced all accusers, Bahraich was for the next three years rack-rented by the successful criminal. Such is the story as told by Sleeman. The episode of the bitten-off finger sounds apocryphal, and it is just conceivable that the whole story may have been fabricated by, or at the instigation of, Agha Mir. But the probability seems in favour of its being substantially true, and the writer has been assured of its correctness by trustworthy residents of Bahraich. The scene of the murder, a little north-west of the town on the Nanpara road, is still pointed out. The house, in the centre of the town, where Amr Singh lived, is now a dispensary.

Whatever the real facts of the case may have been, Hakim Mehndi came back from exile about 1831, in April of which same year Lord Bentinck paid a somewhat notable visit to Lucknow. The Resident had reported in 1828 that "the country had reached so incurable a state of decline that nothing but the assumption of the administration could preserve it from utter ruin." Lord Bentinck now warned the King at a personal interview, and also by a written communication, that if his administration were not reformed from within, the task would have to be undertaken by English Officers. The notion of assuming the administration of Oudh was, and had for some years been, familiar to the Government of India. In July 1831 Lord Bentinck reported to the Court of Directors that:—

"Unless a decided reform in the administration should take place, there would be no remedy left except in the direct assumption of the management of the Oudh territories by the British Government ....Acting in the character of guardian and trustee, we ought to frame an administration entirely native....The only European part of it should be the functionary by whom it shoutd be superintended, and it should only be retained until a complete reform might be brought about, and a guarantee for its continuance obtained, either in the improved character of the reigning prince, or if (he be) incorrigible, in the substitution of his immediate heir, or, in default of such substitute by nonage or incapacity, by the nomination of one of the family as regent, the whole of the revenue being paid into the Oudh treasury."

The Court of Directors, in reply, authorised him to take over the management at once, unless a marked improvement had taken place during the interval. But their final despatch was not dated until the 16th of July 1834, and Lord Bentinck considered the reforms effected by Hakim Mehndi, of whom he had a very high opinion, sufficient ground for granting the Oudh administration a fresh lease of life.

The new minister laid about him vigorously in his attack on the "tortuous, ungodly jungle" of misrule and corruption, which, centreing in Lucknow, overspread the province like a network. He reduced expenses, and especially the salaries and pensions of undeserving favourites. He systematised the revenue collections by introducing the practice of exchanging written agreements concerning the amount to be paid by each malguzar. Civil courts and police arrangements were to some extent reorganised. It has been asserted that he was desirous of seeing the province taken under British management. It is possible that he may have dropped a hint to that effect to some credulous English visitor. But that he could really have had any such wish is wholly incredible. He was emphatically a strong man, with a belief in himself, and in his own power of saving the country from misgovernment. Why should he have wished to abdicate a power which, while it lasted, was almost absolute? His pay as minister was Rs. 300,000, equal in itself to that of the Governor-General of India, while his perquisites, which included a deduction of one-fourth from all official salaries, were supposed to amount to Rs. 1,700,000 more—giving him a total annual income of £ 200,000 sterling. What could he have expected to receive in the way of pension from the British Government after Oudh had been annexed which could have in any way compensated him for the loss of such a position?

He worked nobly, and accomplished much during the short period, less than four years, that he held office. But he was not free from the vice of arrogance, and his want of courtesy to the men with whom he had to deal, and the harshness with which he carried out retrenchments which often pressed hardly on individuals, made him excessively unpopular, and contributed to his downfall. A reforming minister in Oudh necessarily had the whole army of corrupt officials and courtiers to contend against, and in this instance the King himself as well, and the natural difficulties of his situation were intensified by his lack of suavity. From Lord Bentinck he could obtain no active support, and "benevolent neutrality" was not enough to maintain him in his position. After a brief term of office, he was displaced, on some absurd pretext of want of respect for the Qneen-mother, and superseded by one Roshan-ud-daulah, who is represented by some writers as an abandoned quack, a mere average specimen of the large class of "fools aspiring to be knaves" who surrounded Nasir-ud-din; but by Mr. Shore, the author of a now somewhat rare work, "Notes on Indian Affairs," who was wont to understand his subject, is spoken of as "a wel-disposed man, who is fully aware of the dangers of the path now followed, and who would gladly change its course and introduce a reform; but he wants nerve to face the storm which would be raised by those who profit by the present extravagance; so he is content to let things go on in their present train." However blameless may have been his tendencies, it is at least certain that under him such improvements as Hakim Mehndi had effected were speedily undone, and so far as the prosperity of the country depended on the efficiency of the central power, it markedly deteriorated from this time.

Of the state of the province during the latter part of Nasir-ud-din's reign, the most detailed account which we possess is that given by Dr. Butter in his "Outlines of the Topography and Statistics of the Southern Districts of Oudh," written in 1837. As this work is now somewhat rare, a few excerpts from it may be given here.

Dr. Butter attributes "the present miserably depressed state of agriculture" partly to the prevalent insecurity of life and property, and partly from the diminution of rainfall resulting from "the extensive changes of the season and winds which have been remarked within the last twenty-two years, all over the Indian peninsula and seas," and the steady denudation of the north-western forest tracts. In the time of S'adat Ali, the execution of three and five years' leases and counterparts for the payment of revenue was general, and the conditions agreed upon were strictly observed. But since his death, no lease for more than one year had been granted, and the demand was usually fifty per cent. higher. Consequently, cultivators were so impoverished as to be dependent on *mahajans* even for their seed, and were hardly ever out of debt. From the rapacity of the chakladars, the only means of escape was the command either of influence at court, the possessors of which were known as *zor-walas*, or of a body of fighting men strong enough to resist their encroachments. Some of the large landholders kept hundreds of armed retainers for this purpose. The smaller zamindaris in Faizabad and the north of Sultanpur were being rapidly absorbed by Darshan Singh of Mahdona and Harpal Singh, the Gargbansi Thakur of Khapradih. The ryots of these parts, according to Dr. Butter, were longing for the occupation of Oudh by the Company. This, however, is an assertion of which anything like proof is so difficult, and which has been so emphatically denied by trustworthy writers, that it could be wished that Dr. Butter had more distinctly stated the grounds on which he made it. That the sufferers from special acts of oppression may have desired annexation is probable enough, but that there was anything like a general wish for it on the part of a majority, or even a considerable minority of the people, is, to say the least of it, extremely doubtful.

The numbers and quality of agricultural cattle had markedly diminished and deteriorated during the previous twenty-five years. The area of the *dhak* jungles had been much narrowed by the increased demand for firewood during the same period, and that of the *jhils*, or marshes, by frequent drought. The price of oxen varied from five to thirty rupees the pair, but they had become so few that it was usual to see men and women working at the well-rope instead of bullocks. Except along the Sai river, and in parts of Faizabad, where pasture was still abundant, the country cattle were extremely small, thin, and sickly, and the price of *ghi*, which was formerly twenty *sirs*, had risen to one *sir* and a half for the rupee.

Wells were less frequently constructed than of old, and for forty years hardly a *pakka* tank had been built, except the Suraj Kund made at Darshannagar by Darshan Singh, and the Bharat Kund at Bhadarsa by Bakhtawar Singh. The existing tanks held less water, and dried in October instead of in December, so that their utility for irrigation was much reduced. Except in Baiswara, Salon, and the immediate vicinity of Faizabad, arboriculture was much decaying; few new groves were planted, and many old ones cut down.

The chief articles of manufacture were salt, soda, salt-petre, gunpowder, arms, cotton cloths, dye-stuffs, blankets, sugar, paper, and glass. The only exports of any importance seem to have been salt and saltpetre. Hardly any grain appears to have left the province in ordinary times, and exportation was legally prohibited whenever the price of wheat rose as high as twenty *sirs* for the rupee. The chief imports were cotton, silk, copper, brass, arms, and horses.

Apart from Lucknow, the province, or as it would, since 1819, be more strictly correct to term it, the kingdom of Oudh, was divided into eleven *chaklas*, viz. Sultanpur, Aldemau, Pratabgarh, Pachhimrath, Baiswara, Salon, Ahladganj, Gonda-Bahraich, Khairabad, Sandi, and Rusulabad. In theory, each *chakla* should have been in charge of a separate *chakladar*, but it was not uncommon to put two or more *chaklas* under one officer, who was commonly called the Nazim. Thus Darshan Singh for many years held the four first-mentioned districts under his sole authority.

The post of chakladar shared the tendency of all Indian office to become hereditary, though it carried with it no other income than the margin of difference between the sum which its holder contracted to pay into the treasury and the amount which he could succeed in collecting. Chakladars spent eight months of the year in tents, and wherever their camp was pitched, their followers, military, civil, and miscellaneous, stripped the roofs of the neighbouring villages wherewith to make for themselves a temporary shelter. Each pargana, or subdivision of a chakla, of which, including Lucknow, there were seventy in all, was in charge of a Faujdar on twentyfive, and a Diwan on fifteen, rupees a month, salaries which, as may be imagined, were supplemented by perquisites, authorised and otherwise. The assessment of the year was divided into nine *kists*, or instalments, one of which fell due on the appearance of each new moon between Kuar (September) and Jeth (June). The penalties for default were sale of the defaulter's property, imprisonment in irons of himself and his family, and, in the last resort, torture. Powerful zamindars, however, were generally ready to fight, and skirmishes and cannonading were of frequent occurrence. "During the reign of S'adat Ali a single cannonshot could not be fired by a chakladar without being followed by immediate inquiry from Lucknow as to its cause; now, a chakladar may continue firing for a month without question."

The army, excepting Colonel Roberts' brigade, was "an ill-paid, undisciplined rabble," divided into some forty-five *paltans*, or regiments, each of which, when complete, was about twelve hundred strong. The pay of the private soldier was three rupees a month, which was always kept much in arrears, and he had to find himself in arms and ammunition. His only uniform was a turban; as regards the rest of his dress, he was allowed to consult his own fancy. Fixed cantonments, parades, drill, leave of absence—except such as individuals granted themselves—and pensions were all alike unknown. In Shuja'-ud-daulah's time, the pay of the sepoy was seven rupees, and he was provided with uniform and a firelock. Some degree of discipline, too, was maintained, and grants of land were assigned to those who were wounded or otherwise disabled.

S'adat Ali enforced the responsibility of zamindars for all thefts and violent crimes committed on their estates, but "since his death, no court of justice has been held by the Nawabs, and the chakladars attend to nothing but finance. Nothing is said about a murder or a robbery; and consequently crime of all kinds has become much more frequent, especially within the last sixteen years." Gang robberies and dacoities were very common, and travellers went on their way armed to the teeth; "but such has always been the custom of Oudh." The only oases in this moral desert were to be found where power and good intentions were united in the person of some influential landholder, such as Shankar Singh, Raja of Tiloi in Salon.

The administrative state of the country in 1837 is summed up by Dr. Butter in the following scathing terms :—

"A sovereign regardless of his kingdom, except in so far as it supplies him with the means of personal indulgence; a minister (Roshan-ud-daulah) incapable, or unwilling, to stay the ruin of the country; local governors,—or, more properly speaking, farmers of the revenue, invested with virtually despotic power,—left, almost unchecked, to gratify their rapacity, and private enmities: a local army ill-paid, and therefore licentious, undisciplined, and accustomed to defeat; an almost absolute denial of justice in all matters, civil or criminal; and an overwhelming British force distributed through the provinces to maintain the faith of an ill-judged treaty, and to preserve—Peace."

Considering, however, the extent to which the negation of the principle of Government in its judicial and protective aspects was erected into a system, and the almost unbounded scope which was allowed to cupidity, revenge, malice, and almost every evil passion, by the absence of legal restraints, Dr. Butter thought that "the limited amount of crime attributable to private and individual motive that occurs in this country must be considered as highly creditable to the natural humanity, love of justice, and forbearance of its inhabitants. That rapine, burnings, and murder accompany the circuits of its revenue officers, and the predatory expeditions of the chieftains who rule the eastern and wilder districts, is the misfortune, not the fault, of the people, and the inevitable result of that maladministration which permits the accumulation of irresponsible power in the hands of unworthy persons, who, as private individuals, might prove harmless members of the community, but in whose unprepared and undisciplined minds the possession of unlimited power has produced its well-known and barbarizing effects."

The above is certainly not a flattering account of the state of the administration during the later years of Nasir-ud-din. Anyone who wishes to see the opposite side of the picture, as painted by an ardent opponent of annexation and a firm disbeliever in the excellence of English rule as it then existed, will do well to consult a paper, already referred to, by Mr. Shore, on the "Present State and Prospects of Oudh," written in May 1835, about two years before the King's death. It was then generally believed that the province would be annexed within three or four years at most, and the measure was earnestly deprecated by Mr. Shore on the ground that the people were at least as well off, and much more contented, than was the case in our own territory. Some of his assertions may be open to question, and his criticisms on English methods of administration certainly do not err on the side of leniency. It is difficult, after a perusal of Dr. Butter's report, to concur in the opinion that "on the whole, the people of Oudh are not worse governed than our own subjects," or that its "civil and criminal administration is certainly not worse than ours," though the latter, whatever it may be now, was certainly far enough from perfection in 1835. It must be remembered, however, that Mr. Shore's remarks apply principally to western Oudh, while Dr. Butter was concerned only with the south and east. And, taking the country as a whole, the former was probably correct in his contentions that the mass of the population were "far more lightly taxed than those of the British dominions," and that they were "governed by their hereditary rulers, and benefited by the expenditure in the country of the revenue that is raised, instead of being subject to a few foreigners, by whom as much wealth as possible is carried out of the country."

"In every part," he continues, "are to be found respectable landholders and heads of villages, of various degrees of rank and wealth, forming the chain between the higher and lower classes, instead of, as in our provinces, the whole being reduced to the equality of a nation of paupers. They are not cursed with confiscation laws or with special commissions; nor with salt, opium, or other monopolies; they have not one system for realizing the demands of government, and another for individuals; . . . the people are not excluded from every office which a man of integrity could accept; ... and, without exception, there is not a single class which does not possess more wealth and property than the corresponding class in our own provinces. Such, and I fear not any inquiry properly conducted, is a true picture of the state of Oudh at this moment; and yet we are told that the people are sighing for the blessings of the British-Indian rule! When the voice of *the people* shall be really heard,—not that of courtiers and men in power, but of the landholders and peasantry,—they will be found to unite in one cry of 'Of all miseries keep us from that.' So far from their entertaining any such feeling, I can inform my readers, that in one part of the Doab, not many months ago, the people, farmers and peasantry, held quite a rejoicing on hearing a report that that part of the country was to be transferred to the King of Oudh."

Pondering which conflicting opinions of two able and disinterested observers, the candid reader will probably arrive at the judicious, if not very startlingly original conclusion, that there was a good deal to be said on both sides of the question.

Meanwhile the career of Nasir-ud-din was drawing towards its close. Colonel Low, who was Resident at the time, advocated setting up another member of the royal family in his place; but nothing was done. The belief was general in Oudh that the country would be taken over by the Company on the death of the King, and he himself is supposed to have had no dislike to the idea of being the last of his line. Such a course would have been highly acceptable to the horde of parasites who professed to govern the country, and who knew that in it lay their best chance of escaping a scrutiny into their malversations. Moral certainty, or even strong suspicion of peculation would, by a native government, be deemed amply sufficient ground for making them disgorge; while English officers would, as they were well aware, require legal proof, which it was almost always impossible to obtain.

Such was the state of things when, on the night of the 7th of July 1837, the sudden death of Nasir-ud-din was reported to the Resident. The unsuccessful attempt on the part of his adoptive mother the Padshah Begam, widow of Ghazi-ud-din, to place his putative son Munna Jan on the throne, is too well known to be related here. The story of that tumultuous night has been strikingly told by Colonel Sleeman. A scene more wild, more utterly *bizarre*, than the Farhat Baksh palace presented from midnight till morning, can hardly be imagined. The dead body of the late King lay in one chamber; his uncle and successor, the respectable but decrepit Nasir-ud-daulah, sat cowering in fear of his life in another; while a furious mob of match lockmen and dancing-girls filled the Lal Barahdarri, or great hall of state, with mad acclamations in honour of Munna Jan and the Padshad Begam. Their triumph, however, only lasted for a few hours of frantic excitement. The guns soon opened fire, the palace was stormed by a handful of the Company's sepoys, and the insurgents fled, leaving some forty or more of their number dead on the ground. Nasir-ud-daulah, whose elevation to the throne in the event of the late King's death had been previously determined on, was proclaimed under the title of Muhammad Ali Shah, and in a few hours more, all was quiet.

It is generally believed that Nasir-ud-din died of poison. And it is also generally believed that Munna Jan was really his son, and was only repudiated by him to annoy the Padshah Begam, with whom he had for some years been on bad terms, and who was passionately fond of the lad. The boy himself seems to have been quite as vicious and unmanageable as a son of Nasir-ud-din might have been expected to be, and his natural tendencies had been sedulously fostered by the Begam. The pair were speedily deported to Cawnpore and thence to Chunar, where they were kept in confinement, and perhaps no two prisoners of state ever deserved less compassion. Colonel Low and his assistants, Captains Paton and Shakespear, behaved admirably throughout. Their coolness and address both saved their own lives and probably prevented a general massacre. So ended the reign of the most contemptible specimen of the Oudh dynasty.

According to the principle of Muhammadan law already mentioned under the name of Mahjub-ul-irs, Muhammad Ali Shah was the rightful heir to the throne on the death of Nasir-ud-din without legitimate descendants For, Shams-ud-daulah, as aforesaid, had died during the lifetime of his father S'adat Ali, whose eldest son he was, and hence his children were excluded from the succession. His own elevation, however, seems to have been wholly unexpected by Mahammad Ali Shah, and on the eventful night of Nazir-ud-din's death he had signed a Persian declaration, drawn up for the occasion by Colonel Low, by which he agreed to consent to "any new treaty for the better government of the country that the British Government might think proper to propose to him." In accordance with this agreement, Lord Auckland obtained the new King's signature to the so-called treaty of the 18th of September 1837. This document certainly deserves the commendation bestowed by General Sherman on Mark Twain's celebrated map of Paris—"it is but fair to say that it is in some respects a truly remarkable" treaty. It recited that the Company was bound by the treaty of 1801 to defend Oudh, and had done so; and that the King was bound to maintain only a limited number of troops, and had infringed the obligation; that the treaty of 1801 was carried out with difficulty and required modification; that restrictions on the strength of the Oudh force might be relaxed, on condition that part of it was put under British officers; that the sixth article of the aforesaid treaty required the establishment of an improved administration on the reserved territories of Oudh, but provided no remedy for neglect of the requirement, which neglect had been "continued and notorious", and had "exposed the British Government to the reproach of imperfectly fulfilling its obligations to the Oudh people."

From these premises, it was deduced, as a "just and proper" consequence, that the King might maintain such force as he liked, subject to reduction when deemed excessive by the British Government; and that part of this force, not less than two regiments of cavalry, five regiments of infantry, and two companies of artillery, should be organised and disciplined by British officers, as part of the Oudh establishment, at an annual cost to the King of not more than sixteen lakhs of rupees ! The year being one of great scarcity, and the pay of the King's troops and establishments heavily in arrears, the organisation of the new force was postponed for eighteen months, to the 1st of March 1839. This force was to be employed whenever the King, with the concurrence of the Resident, deemed it necessary. But it was to be "clearly understood that such force is not to be employed in the ordinary collection of revenue."

Thus, after S'adat Ali had given up half his territory on the distinct treaty stipulation that no further subsidy or military payments should be required of him or his successors, and that the whole cost of defending Oudh against external attack or internal commotion should, in consideration of this cession, be borne by the Company, Muhammad Ali Shah was now called upon to contribute £160,000 yearly for military expenses on the strength of an agreement signed by him, when aroused in the middle of the night and offered the crown, to accept a new treaty "for the better government of the country."

The treaty further provided that the King was to take measures, in concert with the Resident, for improving the police, revenue, and judicial administration In the event of his failing to attend to advice, "and if (which God forbid) gross and systematic anarchy, oppression, and misrule should hereafter at any time prevail within the Oudh dominions, such as seriously to endanger the public tranquillity, the British Government reserves to itself the right of appointing its own officers to the management of whatsoever portions of the Oudh territory, either to a small or to a great extent, in which such misrule as that above alluded to may have occurred, for so long a period as it may deem necessary; the surplus receipts in such case, after defraying all charges, to be paid into the King's treasury, and a true and faithful account rendered to His Majesty of the receipts and expenditure of the territories so assumed." In this event the Governor-General in Council would "endeavour to maintain as far as possible (with such improvements as they may admit of) the native institutions and forms of administration within the assumed territories, so as to facilitate the restoration of those territories to the Sovereign of Oudh, when the proper period for such restoration shall arrive."

This engagement was entered into with great reluctance by Muhammad Ali Shah. But the Home Government, to their credit, altogether refused to sanction it, and directed restoration of the previous relations as they existed under the treaty of 1801. The abrogation of the treaty was never formally notified to the King, who was merely told that any expenses already incurred in organizing the subsidiary force should be borne by the Company, and no outlay required from him. Such was the history of this curious "treaty", which, though never ratified, was constantly referred to in subsequent discussions, as if it had been of binding force. It consisted of two distinct parts, the first of which would have involved a manifest breach of faith, while the second erred only in the excessive consideration for the King's rights with which it approached the question of reform. The latter portion probably expressed the views of Colonel Low; the former may be ascribed to the Calcutta Council.

With the accession of Muhammad Ali Shah, commenced a period of something like administrative reform. The new King was an old man, who had long lived a retired life, but who, when young, had been well practised in the conduct of affairs by his father S'adat Ali, and was now prudent, parsimonious, and generally decent and business-like. The court was no longer a paradise for fiddlers and buffoons. Roshan-ud-daulah was discharged from the post of Minister, and succeeded by Hakim Mehndi, who now, for the second time, came back from exile to assume the reigns of office. Had he still been the man he was only six or seven years before, much might have been effected in the way of reform, for he had now the influence of the King on his side instead of against him, as had been the case with Nasir-ud-din. But time had told heavily upon the old statesman, and both his brain and hand had forgotten much of their cunning. Death overtook him before he had time to do much towards improving the administration, and he was succeeded by Zakir-ud-daulah, who was also a man of ability. He, too, however, shortly died, and the post of Minister was bestowed on Hakim Mehndi's nephew, Mnaowar-ud-daulah, an honest man and good sportsman, but an indifferent administrator, who remained in office for only two years, after which he retired, and went on pilgrimage to Makka. It was by him that the great tomb of Hakim Mehndi at Lucknow, to the east of Golaganj, was erected. He was succeeded by Sharf-ud-daulah, a nephew of Zakir-ud-daulah, a business-like and respectable man, who remained in office for the rest of the short and uneventful reign of Muhammad Ali Shah, which came to an end in May 1842. Its chief features were attempt to revive the *amani* system of revenue management over a portion of territory paying 35 lakhs of rupees, and the erection of the great Husenabad Imambara, as a burial place for the King. This institution was largely endowed out of the interest payable on investments in the Company's loans. Other works constructed during this reign were a magnificent tank near the Husenabad Imambara, and a mosque, intended to rival the Jama Masjid of Delhi, but which was never completed. A curious *Satkhanda*, or seven-storied tower, was also commenced but never rose beyond the fourth story. Muhammad Ali Shah had found only £ 700,000 in the treasury at his accession out of the accumulations of S'adat Ali on which his two predecessors had drawn lavishly. He himself was careful and saving, and after expending some eighty lakhs in Company's paper and charitable funds, left £788,000 to his son and successor Amjad Ali Shah.

This succession was another illustration of the doctrine of Mahjub-ul-irs, Mumtaz-ud-daulah, son of Asghar Ali, the elder brother of Amjad Ali, being excluded, owing to his father's death during the lifetime of Muhammad Ali Shah.

Sharf-ud-daulah, who was Minister at the time of the late King's death, resigned after two months' experience of Amjad Ali's caprices, and was succeeded by a favourite named Imdad Hosen, under the title of Amin-ud-daulah. This person was removed after five months' exhibition of his incapacity, and Manowar-ud-daulah, who had now returned from his pilgrimage to Makka, held the office for seven months. The mighty tide of Lucknow intrigue then swept him away, and Amin-ud-daulah was recalled. Such work as was done in his time was performed by his deputy, Sýad-ud-daulah, "a low person who has rapidly risen from penury to power by the prostitution of his own sister." The choice of such a miserable *dilettante* as Imdad Hosen was not due to the absence of a better candidate. Sharf-ud-daulah was ready and willing to take office, but the King's personal dislike for him debarred him from employment.

Sir Henry Lawrence, writing in 1845, sums up the situation as follows :—

"The condition of Oudh is yearly becoming worse. The revenue is yearly lessening. There are not less than one hundred thousand soldiers in the service of the zamindars. The revenue is collected by half that number in the King's pay. In more than half the districts of Oudh are strong forts ..surrounded with dense jungle... Originally the effect of a weak or tyrannical government, such fortresses perpetuate anarchy. The amils and other public officers are men of no character, who obtain and retain their position by court bribery. Only the weak pay their revenue; those who have forts, or who, by combination, can withstand the amil, make their own revenue arrangements. Throughout the country nothing exists deserving the name of a judicial or magisterial court. The news-writers are in the pay of the amils, generally their servants; nevertheless, not less than a hundred dacoities or other acts of violence attended with loss of life are annually reported; how many hundreds, then, pass unnoticed ! ...In short, the Government of the country is utterly palsied; its constitution is altogether destroyed; no hope remains. Were any vitality left in Oudh, the country has, during the last twelve years, had a fair opportunity of recovering. If the system of a king, a Minister, a Resident, and a protecting army, could subsist without ruin to the country so ruled, it has had a trial. The scheme cannot be said to have failed for lack of good instruments. The Oudh rulers have been no worse than monarchs so situated usually are; indeed they have been better than might be expected. Weak, vicious, and dissolute they were"—some of them, not all—"but they have seldom been cruel, and have never been false. . . . Among her ministers have been as able individuals as are usually to be found in the East; and there have not been wanting good men and true as Residents. It is the system that is defective, not the tools with which it has been worked. We have tried every variety of interference. We have interfered directly, and we have interfered indirectly, by omission as well as by commission, but it has invariably failed.

One great error has been our interference in trifles, while we stood aloof when important questions were at issue. Another crying evil has been the want of any recognised system of policy in our negotiations with the Lucknow Court. Everything seems to have been mere guesswork and experiment. . . . The King, the Minister, and the Resident have each had their turn. One or other has been alternately everything and nothing. . . . Each member of the triumvirate could vitiate the exertions of one or both of the others; any individual of the three could do incalculable evil; but the three souls must be in one body to effect any good. Such a phenomenon never occurred, there never was an approach to it, unless perhaps for a few months in Colonel Low's time . . . . Is it to remain thus for ever ? Is the fairest province of India always to be harried and rack-rented for the benefit of the family, or rather, to support in idle luxury *one* individual of *one* family ? Forbid it, justice ! forbid it, mercy ! Had any one of the many Governors-General who spoiled Oudh remained a few years longer in office he might have righted her wrongs. But unhappily, while several have been in authority long enough to wound, not one has yet had time to bind up and heal. Hastings began the 'Stand and deliver' system with the Nawabs. More moderate Governors succeeded, who felt ashamed to persecute a family that had already been so pillaged. They pitied the monarch, but they forgot that misdirected mercy to him was cruelty to his subject millions . . . . . Let the management of the province be assumed under some such rules as those which were laid down by Lord W. Bentinck. Let the administration of the country, as far as possible, be native. Let not a rupee come into the Company's coffers. Let Oudh be at last governed, not for one man, the king, but for him and his people."

No apology is needed for this long excerpt, so instinct with the clear vision of a statesman, and with the righteous indignation of an honest man. While the words were being penned, Amjad Ali's frivolous reign was drawing towards its close. He died in February 1847, leaving as memorials of his better impulses the iron bridge across the Gumti, and the metalled road between Cawnpore and Lucknow. He was succeeded by his son Wajid Ali, the last, and, with the exception of Nasir-ud-din, perhaps the most despicable of his line. Ever since the unhappy Afghan expedition of 1838-39, Oudh questions had been kept in abeyance by wars and rumours of wars in different parts of the empire—in Sindh, the Panjab, and Central India. In 1847 there was breathing space, and in November of that year Lord Hardinge visited Lucknow, and administered to Wajid Ali the sort of warning, now become somewhat hackneyed, which had been so often addressed to his predecessors. The young King, however, was not so much accustomed to these admonitions as he afterwards became, and is said to have been too much affected to speak, and to have been able to signify his good intentions only on paper. He was allowed two years' grace—it would have been of as much, or as little, use to allow him a couple of centuries—in which to cleanse his Augean stable, and informed that if a marked improvement were not visible in that time, the result would be the assumption by the Company of the management of Oudh. Previous to this warning, for the first few months after his accession, Wajid Ali had held a few *darbars*, and made some faint show of attending to public business, but he had abandoned the effort before Lord Hardinge's visit, and never resumed it. Colonel Sleeman, as Resident, reported in 1849 that no improvement whatever had taken place; but the second Sikh war, the Burmese war which followed, and political complications in southern and central India, at Satara, Nagpur, Jhansi, Tanjor, and elsewhere, once more staved off the inevitable. In his diary of February 1850, Colonel Sleeman recorded that "the King has natural capacity equal to that of any of those who have preceded him in the sovereignty of Oudh since the death of S'adat Ali in 1814, but he is the only one who has systematically declined to devote any of that capacity, or any of his time, to the conduct of public affairs." He was a poetaster in a small way, and dabbled, in his loftier moments, in music and painting, and if he had had to earn his living by these accomplishments he might have passed muster in a crowd as a decent member of society. But the proverbial "pumpkin as a shade tree" could hardly have been a greater failure than was Wajid Ali as King of Oudh.

The three recognised branches of the Oudh constitution were, as Sir H. Lawrence, in the lately quoted extract, remarks, the King, the Minister, and the Resident. But, besides these, there was generally a fourth personage at work, viz. the great revenue contractor, or Nazim, whose influence, whether for good or evil, was extremely effective. Several of these men have left traditions, either of benevolence or destructiveness, which still survive in the country. Greatest and best of the class was Miyan Almas Ali, who flourished under Shuja'-ud-daulah, and his successors Asaf-ud-daulah and S'adat Ali, and of whom mention has already been made. His mantle seems, to a certain extent, to have descended on Hakim Mehndi, who was contractor of Muhamdi from 1804, and Khairabad from 1809 up to the time of his disgrace and banishment in 1819. His influence in both these districts—the present Kheri and Sitapur—was beneficial. He vastly increased cultivation, and doubled the rent-roll without resort to oppression. But in 1816 he obtained the contract of Bahraich, and, as is generally believed, murdered his predecessor Rai Amr Singh in the manner already described. Whether he was guilty of this crime or not, his management seems to have been pernicious. He raised the revenue 12½ per cent. all round, *i e.* two annas in the rupee—or one-eighth. Whether he would, had he remained longer in office, have mended his ways, and produced as good results as he had shown in Muhamdi and Khairabad, is uncertain. Out of the money which he had obtained by the death of Rai Amr Singh, he bribed the confidants of the then minister, Agha Mir, to persuade the latter to postpone the attempt to get him punished on the charge of murder until a more convenient season, and then, after sending away his available wealth into British territory, took a favourable opportunity of following it himself to Shahjahanpur. The part which he subsequently played in Oudh affairs was as minister rather than as revenue contractor, and has been already noticed. It may here be added that his successor, Hadi Ali Khan, who held the contract of Gonda and Bahraich—now for the first time united under one Nazim—for nine years, up to 1827, enhanced the assessment of Hakim Mehndi by another two annas in the rupee, and when difficulty was found in the collection of this exhorbitant demand, began the vicious system, which had been strictly prohibited by S'adat Ali, of making over *khalsa* (or allodial) lands held by small proprietors paying directly to the State, to Taluqdars, whose first step was generally to crush or drive out the zamindars, and who, until that feat was accomplished, could make nothing of the villages assigned them. Sometimes the contending parties contrived to arrange some *modus vivendi*, but this was the exception. The extent to which small zamindaris were absorbed in taluqas, may be gathered from the fact that during Hadi Ali Khan's tenure of office alone, 439 villages were thus transferred; while between 1827 and 1856, as many as 349 more villages were similarly absorbed, making a total of 788 villages, paying a revenue of more than 5 lakhs, which were lost to the zamindars during a period of forty years. According to some figures given by Colonel Sleeman, the three parganas of Bahraich, Hisampur, and Hariharpur contained in 1807, during the reign of S'adat Ali, and under the management of Balkidas Kanungo, father of Rai Amr Singh, *khalsa* lands paying a revenue of Rs. 5,75,000; while in 1849, during the reign of Wajid Ali and the Nizamat of Muhammad Hosen, the *khalsa* villages of the same three parganas yielded a revenue of no more than Rs.54,000. How completely the zamindars were crushed is apparent from the small number of them who were found at annexation to have kept alive any proprietary right.

The next great Nazim was Darshan Singh, founder of the Mahdona estate, the typical instance of a "mushroom" taluqa. He was fourth son of Purandar Ram, a Pathak Brahman, who came from Gorakhpur about the end of the last century, and settled at Palia, a village twelve miles south-west of Faizabad, and close to Shahganj, the present abode of the family. Bakhtawar Singh, eldest son of Purandar Ram, was a trooper in the Bengal Cavalry, and being stationed at Lucknow, his fine physique attracted the attention of S'adat Ali, who bought him out of the Company's service, and made him a Resildar in his own. By Ghazi-ud-din he was created a Raja, and Muhammad Ali Shah conferred on him the title of the Premier Raja of Oudh, and the Mahdona estate of forty-two villages. Through his influence at court, Darshan Singh, his younger brother, was in 1822 appointed Chakladar of Salon and Baiswara, and Nazim of Sultanpur in 1827, and in 1836 was given the contract of Gonda-Bahraich, but held it only for a short time, during which he contented himself with acquiring information, and did but little. But in 1842 he was again appointed to the same districts, and this time he proceeded to lay about him unsparingly among the large taluqdars, for which purpose, indeed, he had been sent there. He was the hammer with which the Oudh Government attempted to crush refractory barons, and for a time, at any rate, he was certainly an effective instrument. His name was great throughout his Nizamat, and he is still spoken of by the country folk as the "Raja Bahadur." But in 1843 he pursued Dirg Bijai Singh, the young Raja (now Maharaja) of Balrampur, into Naipal territory, where had taken refuge under the protection of the then minister Matbar Singh. The Oudh Government was thus brought into collision with the Naipal Darbar, and the latter was very insistent in its demands for reparation, which being backed up by Lord Ellenborough, Darshan Singh was, in March 1844, dismissed from all his employments, and banished the kingdom. This decision was only arrived at after much intrigue on the part of three of Amjad Ali Shah's wives, the father of one of whom, Hosen Ali, was desirous of succeeding to the estates of the disgraced Nazim. Both Darshan Singh, and his brother Bakhtawar Singh, in whose name the revenue contracts stood, were heavily fined, and their estates made over to Hosen Ali, who undertook to pay Rs. 4,40,000 for them, or one lakh more than had been paid by Darshan Singh.

It was soon found, however, that things would not work in the absence of the powerful exile. Landholders everywhere refused payment, the collections came to a standstill, and in May 1844, after only two months' banishment, Darshan Singh was recalled from Gorakhpur where he had taken up his abode. He was now restored to all his estates, invested with additional honour and titles, and appointed Inspector-General of Oudh, with unlimited powers to reduce everything and everybody—always excepting the Lucknow court—to order and submission. His strenuous energy, and utter unscrupulousness as to the means might, had he lived long enough, have evolved some system out of the chaos. He must have been a man of great force of character, and certainly established a wonderful awe of himself in the minds of all who had to do with him. Faizabad folk will still tell one how a frown from Darshan Singh, accompanied by an imperious "Dastkhatt kar! Kalam Chu!" ("Sign! Touch the pen!") would drive the most recalcitrant taluqdar or zamindar into signing any agreement that was put before him. He died, however, in August 1844, at Ajodhya, leaving his possessions to his three sons, Ram Adhin Singh, Raghbar Dayal Singh, and Man Singh. Of these, the first was a man of little note; the second earned conspicuous infamy as the tyrant of Gonda-Bahraich; while the history of the third is tolerably well known. Man Singh was Nazim of Dariabad and Radauli in 1845, and Sultanpur was soon added to his charge, which he held till 1847, when he was superseded by Agha Ali, better known as the Aghai Sahib. His most celebrated exploit was the murder of Harpal Singh, the Gargbansi chief of Khapradih, whom he had induced by the most solemn oaths to come out of his fort to meet him, on the false pretence of bestowing on him a dress of honour from the Lucknow court. Harpal Singh was sick at the time, but was brought out in his bed, and after a long and seemingly cordial conversation with Man Singh, was cut to pieces by the attendants of the latter as he himself rode away. Colonel Sleeman says that the whole family, with the exception of Bakhtawar Singh, who accompanied him on his tour through the province, had been brought up in the camp of a revenue contractor, than which there is "no school in the world more adapted for training thoroughbred ruffians." Darshan Singh, and Man Singh after him. had amassed an enormous estate by means which earned them the bitter hostility of almost every zamindar upon it. No one who knows anything of the Mahdona Taluqa can be surprised that its management should have collapsed under a revenue system which, whatever its defects, does not permit indiscriminate torture and imprisonment at the discretion of the landlord. For some forty years the family was the most powerful in Oudh, and something like half the province was, with occasional breaks, in the hands of one or other of its members as Nazim. Their influence at court was great, and without it their power in the districts could not have been maintained. Ghazi-ud-din married one of Darshan Singh's daughters, and placed another in his harem. This Darshan Singh, the Shankaldwipi Brahman of Mahdona, must not be confounded with a notorious Kurmi Raja of the same name, who, like Bakhtawar Singh, brother of his namesake, rose to favour under S'adat Ali, and under the title of Ghalib Jang experienced many vicissitudes of honour and disgrace during the reigns of later Nawabs.

One other great Nazim remains to be mentioned, Agha Ali, but his career may be more conveniently noticed in its place in a brief review of Sleeman's "Tour in Oudh," a work which bears much the same relation, to compare small things with great, to the subsequent annexation of the province and the course of the mutiny, that Arthur Young's "Travels in France" bears to the first French Revolution. The "Tour" is the record of a three months' march through Oudh, from the 1st of December 1849 to the 28th of February 1850. During that short period, Colonel Sleeman acquired a surprising amount of information, of which subsequent experience has shown the general accuracy, and it was on this information, mainly, that the province was annexed six years later, though by no means in the manner which the author himself would have advocated. Starting from Lucknow, his route lay through Chinhat, Nawabganj-Barabanki, and Bahramghat, northwards to Bahraich; thence south-east to Gonda and Faizabad, and then almost due south to Sultanpur and Pratabgarh. From Pratabgarh he marched west-north-west to Rai Bareli, and on to Purwa and Safipur, in what is now the Unao district. Thence due north to Sandila, from which his course swept round by Sandi, Shahabad, and Gokaranath to Sitapur and Biswan, thence south-east again to Dariabad, and from that point, due west, back to Lucknow. He thus passed through every one of the twelve districts into which Oudh is at present divided. He made his marches principally on an elephant, talking freely with the native officials and zamindars who accompanied him; and his great powers of observation and knowledge of and keen interest in native ways and traditions, combined with his easy and unpretentious style, make his journal at once a most trustworthy and attractive *compagnon de voyage*. He of course found considerable local variations in the condition of the country. Even so near the capital as Barabanki, the king's officers and the landholders were at open war, and the large Muhammadan taluqdars plundering the small Hindu zamindars. Crossing the Ghaghra into Bahraich at Bahramghat, he found the tables turned, and the Kalhans Rajputs of the Chadwara or

Guarich pargana despoiling the Syads of Jarwal and other Musalman proprietors. The Raikwar estates of Baundi, Rahwa, and Hariharpur—the first of which is now held by the Maharaja of Kapurthala—had been frightfully devastated three or four years previously by the notorious Raghbar Dayal, who held the contract of Gonda-Bahraich in 1846-47. Under pretext of collecting the revenue, this most pernicious villain, who was the son of Darshan Singh and elder brother of Man Singh, harried the whole country, extorted hidden hoards by torture, seized all the cattle he could lay hands on, and, generally, behaved more like a fiend broke loose than any officer, even of the Oudh Government, before or since He and his agents Karm Hosen, Gauri Shankar, Maharaj Singh, and Bihari Lal, are said to have seized twenty-five thousand head of cattle, and two thousand men, women, and children, in the Baundi estate alone. Of the latter, those who could not ransom themselves were sold for what they would fetch. Great numbers of the peasantry fled northwards to the Tarai to escape his exactions, and not a few died under the treatment they received. Even now, the effects of his atrocities, in the shape of a comparatively sparse population in the Bahraich district, have scarcely ceased to be perceptible. Many square miles of fertile soil were thrown out of cultivation, much of which has not yet been reoccupied, and is still covered with long grass which affords shelter to pigs and *nilgai*, whose depredations are a severe check on all attempts to reclaim the waste. "No oppressor," it has been said, "ever wrote his name in a more legible hand" than Raghbar Dayal. And all his extortions were for his own private benefit, not for the King's treasury The cattle sold by him must have been worth, according to Colonel Sleeman, at least a lakh; but all that was credited to the Baundi estate on account of them was one hundred and thirty-seven rupees! His atrocities were, of course, but feebly reported by the news-writers, or *Akhbar Navis,* attached to his office, all of whom were propitiated by a share in the plunder. Thus we are told that "Jiorakhan, the news-writer at Baundi, got one anna for every prisoner brought in; and from two to three rupees for every prisoner released He got every day subsistence for ten men from Karm Hosen. All the news-writers in the neighbourhood got a share of the booty in bullocks, cows, and other animals." And on their absurdly inadequate reports, the Lucknow Darbar passed utterly imbecile and ineffectual orders, which were never carried out.

"Several times during the two months" of September and October, when these iniquities were at their height, "Raghbar Dayal paid off heavy arrears due to his personal servants, by drafts on his agents for prisoners, to be placed at the disposal of the payee, ten and twenty at a time."

The barbarous cruelty of Raghbar Dyal and his minions, and the shameless acts of treachery by which it was supplemented, fill many pages of Colonel Sleeman's diary, and really beggar all description All representations made by the Resident were useless to secure the punishment of these ruffians, who were, Colonel Sleeman tells us, "by all I saw considered more as terrible demons who delighted in blood and murder than as men endowed with any feelings of sympathy for their fellow creatures; and the Government, which employed such men in the management of of districts with uncontrolled power, seemed to be utterly detested and abhorred." Raghbar Dyal Singh went off into British territory, to evade demands for balances, and nothing was done towards punishing him until Colonel Sleeman assumed charge of the office of Resident in January 1849 He induced the King to proclaim him an outlaw, and to offer a reward of three thousand rupees for his arrest, if he failed to come in within three months "He never appeared, but continued to carry on his negotiations for restoration to power at Lucknow, through the very agents whom he had employed in the scenes above described." These latter, Bihari Lal, Gauri Shankar, Karm Hosen, and Maharaj Singh, had been arrested by Colonel .Sleeman's influence and sent into Lucknow, with abundant evidence of their guilt. But they promptly purchased their way out of prison, and were never punished. Soon after this, Raghbar Dyal engaged in a contest with his brother Man Singh for the estates which had been acquired by the latter and Darshan Singh in Sultanpur and Faizabad, by means of deeds of sale, or *bainamas*, which subsequently became notorious in our settlement courts. Man Singh, however, proved too strong for him, and drove him out.

Raghbar Dyal had been succeeded in the contract of Gonda-Bahraich by his uncle Incha Singh, who obtained it at a reduction of four lakhs. He, also, absconded before the end of the year, and was followed by Muhammad Hosen, who raised funds to meet an enhanced demand by the murder of Ram Datt Pande, the great agricultural capitalist of the Gonda district, all whose property he seized. This crime was committed less than a year after Colonel Sleeman had passed through the district, attended by both the future murderer and his victim. Muhammad Hosen sent in a report to Lucknow to the effect that Ram Datt had defaulted on account both of his own estate, and of other landholders for whom he had given security, and when pressed for a settlement of his liabilities had attacked the Nazim and his men, and been killed by the latter in self-defence. The real facts were that, only eight days before he was murdered, the banker had advanced Rs. 80,000 to the Nazim, and had declined to increase his pledges of security until he had further consulted the landholders for whom he had given them. The minister, however (who was "certainly an accessory to this murder after the fact, while there are strong grounds to believe that he was so before the fact"), by order of the King, presented Muhammad Hosen with a dress of honour, and conveyed to him the thanks of His Majesty for having crushed so notorious a rebel! The Resident, with the assistance of the British magistrate of Gorakhpur, Mr. Chester, elicited the truth, and Muhammad Hosen was pressed so hard that he came back from Gorakhpur where he had taken refuge, and surrendered himself at Lucknow. Being, however, a Syad and a Shia, he could not be convicted of murder for the killing of a mere Hindu, and was acquitted by the *mujtahid*, or judge. "No Shia," writes Colonel Sleeman, "could be sentenced to death for the murder even of a Sunni, at Lucknow, much less for that of a Hindu. If a Hindu murders a Hindu, and consents to become a Musalman, he cannot be so sentenced; and if he consents to become so after sentence has been passed, it cannot be carried into execution. Such is the law, and such the every-day practice." It only remains to be added that none of the plundered property of the banker was ever recovered by his family.

The Gonda district had had the advantage of being in great part included in the Bahu Begam's *jaghir*, until her death in 1815. It suffered heavily under Raghbar Dyal, though less so than Bahraich. Colonel Sleeman found but a small portion of it under tillage, and the better classes of cultivators, Kurmis, Muraos and Kachhis, almost non-existent. In 1854 Captain Orr reported that it was fast recovering under the beneficent rule of Sadhan Lal, Kayath, who was *de facto* Nazim, though nominally only the Nazim's Naib, or deputy. He had an excellent lieutenant in Bhya Shioratan

Singh. Chauhan, an old gentleman who is still alive and much respected. Sadhan Lal paid seventeen lakhs of rupees for Gonda and Bahraich, and governed leniently.

Crossing the Ghaghra at Faizabad, Colonel Sleeman found himself in the Sultanpur Nizamat, which included, besides the modern district of Sultanpur, Aldemau, Jagdispur, Pratabgarh, and Pachhimrath, by which latter is here intended, not the old division of that name, which comprised more than a fifth of Oudh, but the modern pargana, lying to the south and west of Faizabad. This huge tract, as well as Dariabad and Radauli, amounting in all to more than one-third of Oudh, had been held by Darshan Singh, and after him by Man Singh, for several years previous to 1847. In that and the preceding year, Raghbar Dyal was in possession of Gonda-Bahraich, and thus the family held between them, with practically unlimited powers, more than one-half of the province. In 1847, Agha Ali, the "Aghai Sahib," was appointed Nazim in place of Man Singh, nominally on the *amani* principle, but it was perfectly well understood that he was to pay a fixed sum. Spasmodic attempts had been made from time to time since the death of S'adat Ali to enforce the *amani* system which he had worked so successfully, but they had always failed. Ghazi-ud-din, within two years of his father's death, reverted to the *ijara* method, and though he allowed trust management to be re-adopted at the instance of Colonel Baillie, it was given up in despair after two years' trial. Under Nasir-ud-din, Hakim Mehndi being minister, and Mr. Maddock and, after him, Colonel Low, Residents, the effort was renewed, but again abadoned after two years. Under Muhammad Ali Shah, while Sharf-ud-daulah was Minister, and Colonels Low and Caulfield, Residents, lands yielding an annual revenue of thirty-five lakhs were made *amani*, and both Sharf-ud-daulah, and his successor Amin-un-daulah, seem to have done their best to make the system work, but without success. The *ijara* system, however, does not seem to have been much abused under this king, for Colonel Low recorded in 1841 that any farmer who paid his revenue regularly might feel confident of being allowed to retain his farm, and some motive was thus provided for conciliation and good management. In 1847, Lord Hardinge had urged Wajid Ali Shah to try *amani* collection once more, and a specimen of it was now to be seen in Agha Ali's management of Sultanpur. So far as the change was anything more than nominal, it seems to have been for the worse. Nothing like a fixed assessment for a term of years was attempted, and every collector was really bound to pay a fixed sum. The more frequently changes took place among the higher officials, the greater were the profits of the Lucknow parasites, whose influence made and unmade Nazims and Chakladars. There were the same abuses of authority, the same rack-renting, the same uncertainty, the same bribery and corruption, under both systems, and Major Troup, Captain Bunbury, and Captain Patrick Orr, of the Oudh auxiliary force, and Captain Alexander Orr, of the police, were all agreed that while the Government was far more robbed, the condition of the peasantry was still worse under *amani* management as it was then worked, than it had been under *ijaradars* like Darshan Singh. Agha Ali saved himself the trouble and expense of collecting the revenue by a free resort to the device known as *kabz*, *i.e.* collection by troops on their own responsibility. *Kabz* was of two sorts, *lakalami*, or unconditional, and *wusuli*. The first was where a commandant gave a pledge to collect and pay, either to the Nazim or to his troops, a fixed sum assessed on the estate made over to him. In the second he only agreed to pay whatever he might be able to collect. The difference between the two was analogous to that between *ijara* and *amani* management, and, so far as the rent-payer was concerned, was practically very little. The *lakalami* pledge alone was theoretically accepted at the Lucknow treasury as equivalent to an actual disbursement; but both had the same practical effect, for the troops might be fully trusted to get their pay out of an estate, if they had to sell every living thing on it to do so. A more ruinous or demoralising system it would be hard to conceive. The only reason for its adoption was its convenience to the Nazim, and the troops had no alternative but to accept the *kabz* or remain unpaid.

Agha Ali had immense power throughout the Sultanpur Nizamat. He had the control of a considerable military force, including two of the *komakhia*, or auxiliary regiments, which were the least inefficient troops in Oudh. All his Chakladars were his relatives. Thus, Agha Haidar, Chakladar of Sultanpur, and Agha Hosen, of Aldemau, were his brothers; Ata Ali, collector of Pachhimrath, and Syad Hosen, of Radauli, were his uncles; and they all played into his hands. The chief Taluqdars of Baiswara were at this time, *i.e.* 1849-50, under *Huzur Tahsil, i.e.* they paid their revenue directly into the head-quarters treasury, and not through the medium of the Nazim or Chakladar. This privilege, which was shared by the Mahdona estate of Man Singh, saved its possessors from arbitrary official exactions, and the cultivators were not liable to forced labour. It was, however, as a matter of course, distasteful to the collectors, and in 1851 Agha Ali stipulated that it should be abolished throughout his Nizamat. The gross revenue of Sultanpur was estimated, roughly speaking, at thirty-six lakhs, of which nine lakhs were payable on account of *Huzur Tahsil* estates. Of the remaining twenty-seven lakhs which passed through his hands, Agha Ali "accounted for" seventeen lakhs to the Government, and retained the other ten for administrative purposes. Out of the seventeen lakhs accounted for, came the *samjhota*, or pay of troops, and all costs of repairs to forts, erection of cantonments, ammunition, and feed of cattle and elephants. The real amount expended on this latter item was almost *nil*, but the nominal sum was very considerable. Another lakh probably found its way into the Nazim's coffers in the shape of *siwae*, or extra items, in addition to the regular revenue demand, and of fees from *firaris*, or absconded landholders, who were returned in the accounts as paying nothing, but who really paid very highly for protection. The maintenance of the news writers, who had been hitherto kept up as a check on collectors, was regarded as an unnecessary precaution under *amani* management, and discontinued. That this, however, was no great loss may be gathered from the glimpse which we have already been afforded of the efficiency of the members of this body who were attached to Raghbar Dyal's camp during the perpetration of his worst atrocities in Bahraich.

Agha Ali's management was unfavourably contrasted with that of Darshan Singh by Captain A. Orr, of the Oudh frontier police, in a letter to the Resident, dated "Camp, Faizabad," 9th of January 1855, one passage of which may be quoted:—

"Raja Darshan Singh is cited as having levied, under *ijara* the highest amount of revenue, *i. e.* thirty-two lakhs.

"Aghai has levied, on *amani*, thirty-six lakhs" (from which sum, however, as Captain Orr himself remarked elsewhere, nine lakhs should be excluded which were paid into the Huzur Tahsil direct).

"Darshan Singh taxed rich and poor in equal proportion.

"Aghai fears the one and ruins the other.

"Darshan Singh was the sworn enemy of dacoits and thieves.

"Aghai has ever spared them.

"Darshan Singh never gave, on the average, less than twenty-two lakhs to Government.

"Aghai gives *nominally* seventeen.

"Darshan Singh made for himself by oppression a vast estate, styled the Bainama, assessed at two lakhs and a half, and yielding from five to six lakh, but ruled it"—as far as mere cultivators were concerned—"with the utmost leniency.

"Aghai, instead of seizing on lands, seized on hard cash."

Probably no people ever got less return for their money in the way of administration than did the people of Oudh at this period. Out of the huge funds at his disposal, Agha Ali maintained four deputies, one in each district, on salaries of from Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 a month, and fifty or sixty *tahsildars* or *jamogdars*, on from Rs. 15 to Rs. 30 each. Such order and stability as existed were mainly due to strong Taluqdars, who, when not at war with the Government, found it expedient to keep their estates well cultivated, and their tenants contented. They had at least the merit of "redeeming the country from the dead level of powerless slaves under an all-powerful Sultan." They formed a break-water behind which it was possible for the artisan to keep alive the germs of manufacturing industry, and the justice which they administered, rude though it was, was at least preferable to the article dispensed under the same name by the King's officers. The town of Shahganj, under the protection of Darshan Singh and Man Singh, contained large numbers of traders and artisans, who are said to have been more secure there than anywhere else in Oudh. An enlightened self-interest, too, prompted them to protect their humble, low-caste cultivators, so that their estates were well tilled. But this was quite compatible with the grossest oppression towards the small proprietors whose villages they had incorporated in their taluqas. Two such men were found by Colonel Sleeman in the hands of Man Singh. They had refused to sign *bainamas*, or deeds of sale, of their property, which he demanded from them, and had been six or seven years in confinement. "I have never," writes Colonel Sleeman, "seen enmity more strong and deadly than that exhibited by contending so-sharers and landholders of all kinds in Oudh,"—a sentence worth remembering with a view to assertions, in the course of recent controversies, that the zamindars did not value the recognition of their rights.

The Taluqdars of Baiswara were Rajput lords, not upstarts, and in writing of them in his monograph on the Rai Bareli clans, Mr. Benett remarks that—

"The chieftain and his retainers were the only unit of Hindu society susceptible of development . . nor were signs wanting that the throne was soon to fall before the rising national life. The central executive was already paralysed, while the ties of family and clan were widened and consolidated on a territorial basis. Had we stayed our hands, it is possible that even now a Hindu Raja would be ruling a Hindu nation from the ancient seat of Hindu religion and empire (Ajodhya), on a throne supported by a landed aristocracy lately developed from the hierarchy of chieftains, whose ancient ranks had been enforced by the addition of all that was most vigorous in the late *regime*. . . . The mistake which vitiates almost all our political theories in India, is that we are the successors of the Musalman emperors; were we only that, we should not be here now. The vital fact is that we have, or at any rate think we have, succeeded, where the Muhammadans, in their strongest days, never attained complete success, in taking the places of the local princes, and in substituting our own for native law and organization. The Commissioner has supplanted not so much the Nazim as the Raja."

It may seem strange that the barons were so often able successfully to resist the King's troops. This was mainly due to the fact that their retainers had much stronger motives to fight for them than the Nazim or Chakladar supplied to his soldiers. If a Taluqdar's retainer was killed in his lord's quarrel, his family was provided for by a grant of land rent-free, called *marwat*. But if one of the King's *sipahis* was killed in action, his family, though nominally entitled to a gratuity equal to his pay for two months, did not even obtain the arrears of pay actually due to him; and if disabled by wounds, he was at once dismissed without a pension. From men with such prospects, devotion was scarcely to be expected.

All through Sultanpur and Baiswara, Colonel Sleeman found the large Taluqdars on bad terms with the Nazim, and in Unao and Hardui, the most zamindari districts in Oudh, the small landholders were quite as turbulent in their way. In Unao, especially, they were at perpetual feud with the detested Chakladar, Bhadrinath. From Hardui, the "Diary" takes us through Muhamdi, or

Kheri, and thence into Khairabad, or Sitapur. These districts, as already mentioned, had been held by Hakim Mehndi for several years previous to his first banishment in 1819. For the greater part of the following thirty years they were held separately. Muhamdi had suffered most of the two, having fallen into the hands of worse contractors. It had had no less than fifteen *ijara* and two *amani* collectors, and the revenue had sunk from seven lakhs, with the people contented, to three lakhs, with everybody miserable. Not one-tenth of the soil was in cultivation, or one-tenth of the nominal villages inhabited. Raja Loni Singh of Mithauli, whose conduct during the Mutiny afterwards earned him peculiar infamy, was the great-man of the district, and was increasing his possession after the usual manner. Khairabad was comparatively quiet and better cultivated. Here Nawab Ali, Taluqdar of Mahmudabad, was extending his estate by means less undisguised, but scarcely less efficacious than had been employed by Darshan Singh and Man Singh in Sultanpur and Faizabad. Like them, he kept his own lands well cultivated, and was not disliked by low-caste tenants, though detested by zamindars.

The four great evils of rural Oudh at this period are represented by Colonel Sleeman to have been :—

(1) Depredations of refractory Taluqdars;
(2) Rack-renting by contractors;
(3) Dissensions among landholders, created or fostered by contractors;
(4) Depredations of troops and camp-followers.

The first of these scourges needs no elucidation.

Of the second, an instance may be quoted from Captain Alexander Orr. The assessment of Chandausi, a zamindari in the Sultanpur Nizamat, was officially supposed at Lucknow to amount to Rs. 5,338. Agha Ali, however, assessed it at Rs. 7,200, and further imposed demands for Rs. 1,500 as his own *nazarana*, Rs. 1,200 as that of Agha Haidar, his brother and Chakladar, Rs. 1,100 as that of Bande Hosen, Agha Haidar's deputy, and lastly, Rs. 113 as the due of Ram Baksh, Diwan of Bande Hosen, making a total of Rs. 11,113, or considerably more than double the Lucknow assessment. Nor was this an isolated instance.

To turn to the third item in Colonel Sleeman's list, so long as Rajputs remained united, the King's officials could do nothing with them. The warrior caste certainly possesses, or did possess, a capacity for coherent action which is wanting to Brahmans; and where they were powerful, Nazims and Chakladars could only make head against them by taking advantage of their disputes among themselves, or creating quarrels where they found none ready made. According to old Bakhtawar Singh, brother of Darshan Singh, who had been deputed by the Darbar to accompany Colonel Sleeman on his tour, there were more well-to-do landholders in Oudh in the time of S'adat Ali than were to be found in 1850; but they did not dare to hold their head so high, the local officers being all able men, and supported by a wing of one of the Company's regiments, and some good guns. Since then, the strength of the Taluqdars had been waxing and that of the Government waning, while the aid of the Company's troops had been gradually withdrawn. Landholders kept ten armed men where formerly they had kept only one, and spent on their maintenance the rents which they withheld from the Government. The chief object with which they kept up their armed retainers was to resist all attempts at reduction of their informally granted *nankar* allowances. None of these grants had been sanctioned at Lucknow since the death of S'adat Ali in 1814 A.D., corresponding to 1222 Fasli; but they had been made and acquiesced in, by a usurpation of authority on the part of Nazims and Chakladars, to the amount of some forty lakhs In 1850, orders were issued for the resumption of all such grants of any later date than 1222 Fasli, but it was, of course, impossible to carry them out, and their only effect was a change in the nomenclature employed in the revenue accounts. Henceforth the sanctioned grants were known as "*nankar san bais*," or the allowances of the year twenty-two, and the subsequent informal reductions as "*kami ruqumat*," or deficiency of assets.

With regard to the oppression and plundering which the people had to endure at the hands of troops and camp-followers, without any wish to exaggerate them, and even with a readiness to believe that the sins of the Oudh Government have often been painted in blacker colours than they deserved, it is still impossible to doubt that the suffering from this source was really very great. Colonel Sleeman was certainly not prejudiced against native governments as such, and though it has been said, probably with some degree of truth, that he looked at things "through Darbar spectacles," and unconsciously exaggerated the enormities of the Taluqdars, the very people whom he met on the roads being tutored what to say to him, yet there can be no ground for supposing that the Oudh Government would go out of its way to make the conduct of its own troops or servants appear more odious or oppressive than it actually was. Yet it would be difficult to imagine more lamentable scenes of tyranny and hardship than those which he describes as of constant occurrence, whenever the Najib corps, of which there were thirty-two, were moved from one cantonment to another. And they were incessantly on the move; for if kept long in one place, they created an artificial famine. "The line of march," he writes, "of one of these corps is like the road to the temple of Jagannath." Captain Orr speaks in equally strong terms of this subject, and of the *begari*, or forced labour system, he writes :—

"The Chamar, Lodh, Kurmi, and all inferior castes are the prey of all, caught at every hour of the day or night, made use of as beasts of burthen, beaten and abused, treated as if incapable of feeling pain or humiliation, never remunerated, but often deprived of the scanty clothing they may possess."

This is one of the few points on which it is possible to feel satisfactory assurance that the poor are better off under British than they were under native rule.

Even so mere a sketch in outline as is here attempted, of the condition of Oudh during the few years previous to annexation, would not be complete without some portrayal of the state of affairs at Lucknow as well as in the provinces. Colonel Sleeman's "Diary" is full of digressions relating to the affairs of the court. His well-known character and personal leanings toward any tolerable native government are sufficient guarantees for the freedom from adverse prejudice of the picture which he draws in these oft-repeated touches. It leaves no doubt that Wajid Ali, though not naturally a stupid or unamiable man, was as deeply sunk in the slough of sloth and effeminacy as it is possible for any man, even an oriental prince born in the purple, to be, or that he was surrounded by as profligate and insatiable a set of knaves as any such prince ever succeeded in attracting to himself. A strange life it must have been that he led in that "enchanted Armida palace" of his, where we catch glimpses of him through the motley crowd of singers, fiddlers, sorcerers, cock-fighters, negroes, eunuchs, and buffoons, who hovered round him, like moths round a very flickering and faint-coloured lamp. As for his minister, Ali Nakki Khan, whom he had appointed in August 1847, contrary to urgent advice of Colonel Richmond, the then Resident, it is enough to quote Colonel Sleeman's report of 1851, in which he writes, "He appears to me to be the most deeply interested of all in maintaining the worst abuses of the present system of administration, and I consider it painful and humiliating to be obliged, by my public duties, to hold, any longer, communication with such a person on the subject of the many evils which he could, but will not, remedy; of the many wrongs which he could, but will not, redress; and of the many fearful sufferings which he could, but will not, relieve."

One or two insances of the way in which the Kings of Oudh were plundered by their own officials may not be out of place here.

S'adat Ali had a favourite garden at Muhamdi, where he kept up a large establishment of gardeners and bullocks. This fell into decay after his death, and all the cattle save two bullocks were sold off, and all but two of the gardeners were discharged. But up to 1847, thirty-three years after the death of S'adat Ali, Rs. 69,000 a year was charged to the royal accounts for pay of gardeners and feed of cattle supposed to be employed in the Muhamdi garden.

Again, one thousand seven hundred and thirty bullocks were charged for in the accounts of the artillery park at Lucknow. The actual number of bullocks maintained was twenty.

Again, Ghazi-ud-din Haidar had a favourite dog, the barking of which happended one day to annoy him. He was told that the best remedy to stop the dog's barking was a daily dose of a *sir* of conserve of roses and a bottle of rose-water, and gave orders accordingly. The dog died in 1816, but the charge for its daily allowance of conserve of roses and of rose-water was continued up to 1850.

In spite, however, of the King's incapacity and the maladministration of his officers, it was natural enough that he should be popular in the capital where his resources were so profusely lavished. The shopkeepers of Lucknow were probably wealthier than those of any other town in India except Calcutta. Manufactures of all sorts of costly and useless products flourished luxuriantly. With the traders and artisans of Lucknow, annexation could hardly be otherwise than unpopular, and the decay of these classes during the last twenty-years, though inevitable, has been pitiful in the extreme. Artificially stimulated by the lavishness of the court, they have necessarily declined since the stream of expenditure has been stayed. Probably the only class in Lucknow to whom annexation was not altogether distasteful was that of the ministers and other officers who had amassed large sums by peculation, and were not wholly unwilling to see the source of their gains stopped for the future on condition of secure enioyment of what they had already acquired.

CHAPTER V

ANNEXATION

The annexation of Oudh has perhaps incurred more unsparing condemnation than any other act of the East India Company's Government since the days of Warren Hastings. It has been denounced, under the name of "Dacoity in Excelsis", as the last and most glaring, if not the worst, illustration of the Dalhousie policy, and as one of the proximate causes of the Mutiny. Some brief account, often though the tale has been told already, should perhaps be given here of the circumstances under which the step was adopted, the motives and reasons by which the persons chiefly responsible for it were actuated, and the mode in which it was carried out. Of the condition of the province during the closing years of the reign of Wajid Ali Shah a description has been attempted in the previous chapter; and it is in that condition that the measure of annexation finds its best and, indeed, its only possible justification.

On the 21st November 1854, General Outram being about to proceed to Lucknow to take over charge from Colonel Sleeman, Lord Dalhousie indited a minute, proposing that the new Resident should be instructed to make "an enquiry into the present state of that country; with a view to determine whether its affairs still continue in that state in which Colonel Sleeman from time to time described them to be; whether the improvement which Lord Hardinge peremptorily demanded seven years ago at the hands of the King, in pursuance of the treaty of 1801, has in any degree been effected; and whether the duty imposed upon the British Government on that treaty, a duty recognised by Lord William Bentinck in 1831, and reiterated by Lord Hardinge in 1847, will in truth any longer admit of our honestly indulging the reluctance we have felt to have recourse to those extreme measures which alone can be of any real efficacy in remedying the evils from which the state of Oudh has suffered so long."

The Members of Council at this time were Mr. Dorin, Colonel John Low, formerly for eleven years Resident at Lucknow, Mr. Barnes Peacocke, and Mr. John Peter Grant. The first three briefly assented to this proposal, while the fourth recorded the grounds of his assent at some length, declaring that "in the case of Oudh, a state wholly supported by the British Government, and bound to be wholly guided by that Government, he had never been able to understand how the policy of even temporary non-interference could be justifiable, on any other ground than that, for the time being, non-interference was better for the people of Oudh than interference. How many years ago it is since any statesman has maintained that ground, we need not stop to count."

Accordingly, by Mr. Secretary Edmonstone's letter of the 24th of November 1854, General Outram was instructed to inquire into and report on the condition of Oudh.

In obedience to these instructions, the Resident' on the 15th of March 1855, submitted a voluminous report, divided into seven heads, relating respectively to:—

(1) The Sovereign and his Minister.
(2) Revenue and Finance.
(3) Judicial Courts and Police.
(4) The Army.
(5) Roads and Public Works.
(6) Statistics of Crimes.
(7) Oppressions and Cruelties.

The general character of this report may be sufficiently imagined by anyone who has read the preceding chapter. There had been, in short, no improvement, and there is no prospect of improvement, on the state of things described by Colonel Sleeman. All that could be said for the last five of the Kings of Oudh was that they had been always ready and desirous to comply, as far as possible, with all demands made by the British Government relating to its own interests; and almost the only redeeming features about the administration were the Frontier Police, under the command of European officers, maintained at a cost of Rs. 77,000 annually, and sundry institutions kept up for the benefit of Europeans at a yearly cost of Rs. 47,000.

The revenues of Oudh were derived almost entirely from the land, and its sources were four, viz. :—

(1) Allodial lands, or Crown estates, known as *khalsa*.
(2) Huzur Tahsil estates, paying revenue directly to Government.

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(3) Districts held under contract by *ijaradars*, or farmers.

(4) Districts held under *amani*, or trust management.

The transfer of *khalsa* lands to Taluqdars, which has been described in the Bahraich district, had been going on all over the province. The Huzur Tahsil system which had "always proved more successful and popular in Oudh than any other mode of management," was much abused by the Diwan Raja Balkishn at Lucknow, who was supposed to superintend it. He and his subordinates were in the habit of raising rents for their own benefit, by the threat, if their demands were not acquiesced in, of handing over the estate of the recusant to a *Chakladar*. Of the *ijara* and *amani* methods of collection, enough has been said already. With regard to the expenditure and financial arrangements generally, the Resident found it almost impossible to obtain any statistics or information. Those who possessed any official knowledge of the subject dared not communicate it, and the Minister, Ali Nakki Khan, demurred to furnishing any accounts, on the ground that there was no precedent for such a course. Pensions of the royal family and other stipendiaries were heavily in arrear. The annual cost of the civil and police establishments seems to have been about 38 and 12½ lakhs respectively. The pay of the Minister was Rs. 114,000 yearly, and his perquisites amounted to more than seven lakhs, or a total of more than £ 80,000, nearly thrice the salary of the Governor-General. The total revenues of 1853 and 1854 appear to have amounted to about £ 1,200,000. Of this sum only between £ 30,000 and £ 40,000 found its way to the Lucknow treasury, the remainder being "accounted for" by the Nazims as expended in the districts on different branches of Government service. The amount actually disbursed was probably little more than half a million, something like £ 350,000 being absorbed by Nazims and their subordinates, with the assistance of the Darbar official at Lucknow.

As for judicial courts, there were none, except at the capital, and such as were there maintained were worthless, being presided over by men of no character, who treated their position simply as a means for extortion. The total cost of the judicial establishments for the whole of Oudh was less than Rs. 16,000 a year. Their efficiency was sufficiently illustrated by the acquittal of Muhammad Hosen, who, while Nazim of Gonda-Bahraich, murdered the banker Ram Datt Pande, as already related, and a host of similar, though less conspicuous, instances might be quoted. Revenue courts there were none. The charge of district police stations was farmed out by the Nazims to the highest bidder.

The military force numbered about 60,000 men of all arms, costing rather more than £ 420,000 yearly. The *komakhia*, or auxiliary regiments, commanded by European officers, of which there were four, were fairly efficient. The rest were an undisciplined rabble, paid at the rate of three to four rupees a month, and always kept in arrears, but allowed to compensate themselves by living at free quarters on the peasantry. Their numbers, moreover, were merely nominal, though pay for their full strength was of course drawn by the paymasters, or *Bakshis*, acting in collusion with the Nazims.

Roads and public works could hardly be said to exist. The only metalled road in Oudh was that between Cawnpore and Lucknow. There were about half-a-dozen permanent bridges, besides two spanning the Gumti at Lucknow; and General Outram, after mentioning these, adds that, "with the exception of a few Government forts, there are literally no other public works in Oudh.'' Immense sums were charged in the accounts for the erection of royal palaces and tombs, of which but a small proportion was actually thus expended.

As for the remaining heads of the report, Crimes and Outrages, and Oppressions and Cruelties by Government Officials, little or nothing need be said. The killed and wounded in dacoities and riots were estimated at about two thousand annually, and irresponsible officials of all sorts continued to do after their kind, with a psychologically curious disregard of the amount of pain they might inflict in gaining their end of extorting money. In conclusion, General Outram felt himself bound to declare, though with great reluctance, his wish to uphold native states wherever possible being well known, that "the lamentable condition of this kingdom has been caused by the very culpable apathy and gross misrule of the Sovereign and his Darbar"; that the improvement of administration demanded by Lord Hardings seven years before had been in no degree effected; and that there was, in his opinion, no doubt that the British Government could no longer honestly refrain from "those extreme measures which could alone be of any real efficacy," or, in other words, from taking the administration of Oudh into its own hands.

At the time of the receipt of this despatch at Calcutta, Lord Dalhousie was absent at Utakamand, and thither it was transmitted to him by General Low, who recorded his concurrence in the opinion expressed in its concluding paragraphs, because :—

"The public and shameful oppressions committed on the people by Government officers in Oudh have of late years been constant and extreme; because the King of Oudh had continually, during many years, broken the treaty (of 1801) by systematically disregarding our advice instead of following it, or even endeavouring to follow it; because we are bound by *treaty* (quite different in that respect from our position relatively to most of the great native states) to prevent serious interior misrule in Oudh; because it has been fully proved that we have not prevented it, and that we cannot prevent it by the present mode of conducting our relations with that State; and because no man of common sense can entertain the smallest expectation that the present King of Oudh can ever become an efficient ruler of his country."

To these words, weighty from their author's long experience as Resident at Lucknow, as well as from his individual leanings in favour of native states, General Low added that he had good grounds for believing that the long delay to interfere in Oudh, after repeated warnings, had created a general impression that such interference was prohibited by orders from England; and that Oudh officials had thus less fear of the Resident or the Company, as regards internal mismanagement, than they had felt at any time previous to Lord Hardinge's visit in 1847.

From Utakamand, Lord Dalhousie wrote his monster minute of the 18th of June 1855, the greater part of which consists of a review of our relations with Oudh from the time of Warren Hastings, and of the information furnished by General Outram, Colonel Sleeman, and others regarding its present condition. Passing to the immediate practical question of what was to be done, the Governor-General remarked that as the so-called treaty of 1837 had never been sanctioned by the Court of Directors, regard must be had exclusively to the trreaty of 1801. This latter, he potnted out, unfortunately contained no provision for the course to be adopted in the event of the Oudh Government failing to maintain a tolerable administration; and also barred the employment of English officers in Oudh by providing that the system of administration to be introduced by the Nawab was "to be carried into effect by his own officers."

So long, therefore, "as observance shall be paid to the letter, and to the obvious spirit of the treaty of 1801, that instrument will prohibit the admission of British officers to take any part in the management of Oudh, and will ever stand as an insurmountable barrier to the employment, by the British Government, of those means which can alone be effectual to introduce into Oudh 'such a system of administration as shall be conducive to the prosperity of' the King's 'subjects, and be calculated to secure the lives and property of the inhabitants.' "

On the assumption that active interference in Oudh was, in some shape or other, inevitable, Lord Dalhousie proceeded to consider the various modes in which effect might be given to it. And here it will be well to quote his own wording of the alternative courses open:—

"1st. The King may be required to abdicate the sovereign powers he has abused, and to consent to the incorporation of Oudh with the territories of the British Crown.

"2nd. The King may be permitted to retain his royal title and position, but may be required to vest the whole civil and military administration of his kingdom in the Government of the East India Company, for ever.

"3rd. His Majesty may be urged to make over his dominions to the management of British officers, for a time.

"4th. The King may be invited to place the management of the country in the hands of the Resident; under whose directions it shall be carried on by the officers of the King, acting with such British officers as may be appointed to aid them."

Of these alternatives, Lord Dalhousie believed the first to be abstractedly the best, but from a regard to the fidelity which had always been shown to the Company by the Nawabs and Kings of Oudḥ, he did not recommend its adoption. "The rulers of Oudh," he wrote, "however unfaithful they may have been to the trust confided to them—however gross may have been their neglect, however grievous their misgovernment, of the people committed to their charge—have yet ever been faithful and true in their adherence to the British power. No wavering friendship has been laid to their charge. They have long acknowledged our power; have submitted, without a murmur, to our supremacy; and have aided us, as best they could, in the hour of our utmost need."

The first proposal, then, being too severe; the fourth, insufficient, as had been pointed out by Lord Wellesley in 1799; and any merely temporary arrangement, such as was contemplated by the third, being self-condemned, as well as by the precedents of the Nizam's territories and of Nagpur; Lord Dalhousie strongly advocated the adoption of the second. To attain the end aimed at by that proposal, he advised that the King should be informed that the treaty of 1801 was at an end, owing to his failure to fulfil the obligation which it imposed upon him of maintaining a decent administration in Oudh, and that the Resident was under orders to quit Lucknow, and to withdraw the subsidiary force, unless the King gave his consent to a draft treaty which was to be laid before him. The main features of this instrument were to be the annulment of all previous treaties; the transfer of the "whole civil and military administration, with all power, jurisdiction, rights, and claims thereto belonging" from the hands of the King to those of the Company's Government; the allotment of a liberal provision for the King, and also for the members of the royal family, not being his own children; and, last and most important of all:—

"That the revenues of Oudh shall be applied, first, to the payment of the expenses of the civil and military administration of the province; secondly, to the payment of the stipends secured in the preceding Articles to the King and to the royal family; and thirdly, to the improvement and benefit of the province. *The residue of the revenues, after the foregoing deductions, shall be at the disposal of the East India Company.*"

In reference to this last Article, Lord Dalhousie wrote: "For many years to come, while the reform of the administration of Oudh is still in progress, and while its natural resources are not yet fully recruited, the provision will remain altogether inoperative. But in process of time, the revenues of the country will largely increase under the management of British officers, and a surplus will probably remain, after meeting all ordinary charges of the administration, and after providing for those measures of gradual improvement to which the increase in the revenues of the province ought unquestionably to be made applicable in the first instance."

The Governor-General considered the appropriation by the Company's Government of the surplus revenues "perfectly consonant with justice and equity, and founded upon a just consideration for the general good of that Empire of which Oudh originally was, and still is, no more than a province." But if the Court of Directors desired that the interference of the British Government should be "not only virtually, but in the very letter, a disinterested act," he was prepared to omit any such provision (which had been borrowed from the treaty with Tanjor) from the proposed compact; only stipulating that in any new relations to be entered on with Oudh, it should be at least arranged that all civil charges and all charges of troops which it might prove necessary to station within the province, should be defrayed from its revenues; as it would no longer, the treaty of 1801 having been declared at an end, be needful to maintain any military force in the province, "were it not for the contemplated renewal and extension of our relations with the King of Oudh."

The Governor-General's minute was circulated in due course to the four Members of Council, all of whom expressed opinions, more or less weighty, on the subject.

Mr. Dorin, the senior member, advocated the adoption of Lord Dalhousie's first proposal, for simply incorporating Oudh with British territory, and deprecated the continuance of Wajid Ali Shah of the title of King.

General Low was of opinion that the Oudh Government was, "from the Prime Minister down to the meanest chaprasi," so thoroughly and inveterately corrupt, that there was no remedy left but the exclusive, permanent, and direct assumption of the management of the country by the Company. He protested, however, against the notion of withdrawing the Resident and troops, as dangerous and unnecessary; and in the event of the King's refusing to sign a new treaty, recommended that Lord Wellesley's precedent in the case of S'adat Ali in 1801 should be followed, and orders issued to the native collectors to pay no more revenue into his treasury.

Mr. Grant's line of argument was that the British Government had always occupied towards Oudh the position of paramount state towards subordinate province; that what the emperor of Delhi nominally was, that we had really been; that the arrangement of 1801 was not founded on any previous treaty; and that this fact was fully recognised by Lord Wellesley, who always addressed S'adat Ali as a subordinate ruler—(he might almost have added, as a convicted pickpocket)—and by S'adat Ali himself, so much so that when he proposed to abdicate, he only requested to be succeeded by any one of his sons whom Lord Wellesley might choose. From all this it followed that if the treaty of 1801 were set aside, the position of Oudh to the Company would still be, as it was previous to that treaty, the position of subject province to paramount state; and the King would have no rights as against us in 1855 which the Subahdar had not in 1800, except such as might be guaranteed by intermediate agreements. Thus, "the decision as to what ought to be done now must follow the decision that shall be pronounced upon the historical point of the justice of Lord Wellesley's conduct in 1801." Mr. Grant held that Lord Wellesley was justified in what he did, and quoted James Mill's opinion, that if his premises were correct, he ought to have gone still further, and annexed the whole instead of only half of the Oudh territories.

It apparently did not occur to Mr. Grant, or to any other Member of Council, that if the *status quo ante* the treaty of 1801 was to be reverted to, Wajid Ali might not unplausibly have asserted a claim to be restored to possession of all the territory which had been ceded to the Company under that treaty. The ceded territory, yielding a revenue of £ 1,300,000, was made over to the Company as security for the charges of the troops to be employed in the defence of Oudh. If those troops were to be withdrawn, the Company was to be relieved of all responsibility for the defence of Oudh, it would seem to follow logically that the ceded districts should have been restored, on the principle of *cessante causa cessat et effectus*.

The Subahdars of Oudh, the return to Mr. Grant's minute, never claimed, before they came into contact with the British power, to be independent sovereigns, or professed any right to retain the Subah if it had pleased the Emperor of Delhi to recall them. Shuja'-ud-daulah, when he espoused the cause of Mir Kasim, complained, not that the Calcutta Council had driven him out of Bengal, but that they had driven him out without the Emperor's authority. "How is it," he asked, "that you turn and establish Nawabs at pleasure, without the consent of the Imperial Court ?" We stand, Mr. Grant contended, in the place of the Mughal, and our position only differs from his in the respect that we have the power to do that which it would have been his duty to do if he had been able, while he had not that power. "Our practice has accorded with no other theory," *e.g.* the deposition of Wazir Ali in 1798, and the setting aside of Munna Jan in 1837. "These were doubtless very proper acts on our part; but if such acts were not founded on the assertion of our having supreme dominion over the kings and people of Oudh, I ask on what doctrine they were founded, and by what reasoning they can be justified ? Is it only when the People are concerned that we should hesitate to assert our supreme dominion ?"

Mr. Grant preferred the first of Lord Dalhousie's proposals, as involving no fiction, to the second, and so agreed with Mr. Dorin; but differed from him in wishing to allow the King, though not his descendants, to retain the royal title. He condemned, as at once needless and hazardous, the proposal to withdraw our troops and sever all relations; and recommended that Oudh should be at once incorporated with British territory, with the King's consent if it were procurable; if not, then without it.

Mr. Peacocke—afterwards Sir Barnes Peacocke—discussed the question from the legal point of view, and argued that the Company had a right to compel enforcement of the treaty of 1801, so far as it had been broken by the King, *i.e.* in his failure to secure good government, quoting Vattel in support of his position He preferred the second of the Governor-General's alternatives, but was of opinion that "no pecuniary benefit should be derived by the East India Company", and therefore "could not recommend that any part of the revenues of Oudh should be applied to the payment of the military administration of the province"; seeing that under the treaty of 1801 we agreed to defend Oudh in consideration of the ceded territory. He argued that, our interference being for the sake of the people, they should not be made to bear any burthen which they would not have had to bear if the treaty of 1801 had been fulfilled by the King. He therefore thought that all except military expenses should be defrayed out of the revenues of Oudh, and that the whole surplus should be spent on the province.

It is easy enough to fancy Lord Dalhousie muttering to himself as he read Mr. Peacocke's minute that this was mere ideology: but not perhaps quite so easy, except by a return to first principles and a total abandonment of all legal grounds, to suggest an adequate answer to Mr. Peacocke's scruples.

On the 21st of November 1855, the Court of Directors despatched their reply to the questions raised by General Outram's report, and the minutes of the Governor-General and Members of Council. They had no hesitation in deciding that the government—or misgovernment. they were much the same thing—of the King of Oudh must be put an end to, once for all. But unless Lord Dalhousie felt morally certain that the annonncement to the King that all existing treaties were cancelled, and that all connection between his Government and that of the Company was at an end unless he accepted the new treaty to be proposed to him, would at once have the effect of inducing him to accept it, the alternative should not be offered to him. With regard to the terms of the treaty to be laid before him, and the mode to be adopted of disposing of the surplus revenues of Oudh, the Court of Directors, beyond an expression of opinion that the reigning family should be very liberally provided for, maintained a discreet and significant silence. The question had been expressly put to them by Lord Dalhousie in his minute, and certainly seems one which demanded an answer. But answer came there none. And this, perhaps, was hardly so odd as it at first sight seems, for the Honourable Court may have been of opinion that the matter, if left in the hands of the Governor-General, would arrange itself in a manner not wholly unfavourable to their pecuniary interests, while the issue of explicit instructions might have been awkward, not to say embarrassing. A considerable sense of decorum always pervaded the proceedings of the Honourable Court.

On the 23rd of January 1856 instructions, framed by Lord Dalhousie and concurred in by the other Members of Council, were despatched to General Outram concerning the steps to be taken for the assumption of the Government of Oudh. Troops were to be moved up to Cawnpore, and such a force as the Resident thought requisite to be marched to Lucknow, under the immediate command of Colonel Wheler as Brigadier. If hostilities appeared imminent, the Resident was authorised to assume control over all the troops in Oudh. The news of his deposition was to be broken to the King through his Minister, Ali Nakki Khan, after which the Resident was to obtain an interview with Wajid Ali himself, at which he was to inform him that "the time had now come when the systematic violation of the treaty of 1801, by every successive Ruler of Oudh, from the date of its signature to the present day, rendered it the imperative duty of the British Government to declare the treaty null and void, and to proceed either to form new engagements with the King of Oudh, or to assume to itself the administration of his territories."

The King was then to be handed a letter from Lord Dalhousie, which recapitulated the relations between the British Government and that of Oudh from their beginning, in a manner which left little to be desired, except that it made no mention of the extortions of Warren Hastings, and was grossly unjust to S'adat Ali. The letter concluded, after fervidly denouncing the existing misrule, and declaring that the British Government would be "guilty in the sight of God and man, if it were any longer to aid in sustaining, by its countenance and power, an administration fraught with suffering to millions," and that the violated treaty of 1801 was at an end, with an exhortation to the King to accept the proposals which would be made to him by General Outram, and a warning of the consequences of refusal.

The perusal of the letter was to be followed by the presentation of a draft treaty, which the king was to be invited to sign. The purport of this treaty was much the same as had been proposed by Lord Dalhousie in his minute of the 18th of June 1855. Wajid Ali and his successors were to retain the title of "King of Oudh," and to receive an annual pension of twelve lakhs, in addition to which a body-guard was to be maintained for Wajid Ali himself, at a cost of not more than three lakhs yearly. All collateral members of the royal family who were at that time provided for by the King were in future to be maintained by the Company. Wajid Ali and his successors were to retain "full and exclusive jurisdiction" in the palace at Lucknow, and in his favourite parks of Dilkhusha and Bibiapur, but were not to inflict the punishment of death without the previous consent of the Governor-General in Council. The bitter pill of which the above provisions formed the sugared coating was that "the sole and exclusive administration of the civil and military government of the territories of Oudh shall be henceforth vested, for ever, in the Honourable East India Company, *together with the full and exclusive right to the revenues thereof.*"

Not in vain was the confidence of the Honourable Court of Directors.

Two draft proclamations addressed to the people of Oudh were forwarded to the Resident along with his instructions. The first was to be issued in case the King consented to sign the treaty; the second in the event of his refusal. The difference between them consisted entirely in the recitals. In either case, it was proclaimed that the government of Oudh was henceforth vested in the East India Company, to whose officers all classes of the inhabitants were called upon to render obedience, under penalties. In conclusion it was declared that:—

"The revenue of the districts shall be determined on a fair and settled basis.

"The gradual improvement of the Oudh territories shall be steadily pursued.

"Justice shall be measured out with an equal hand.

"Protection shall be given to life and property; and every man shall enjoy, henceforth, his just rights, without fear of molestation."

The Resident was instructed to afford to the King all possible explanation of the reasons for the course adopted, and to do all in his power to persuade him to sign the treaty, offering, should it seem necessary, a yearly pension of fifteen lakhs instead of twelve. All promises of amendment of his administration on the part of the King, and all attempts to argue the point, or to procure postponement of the assumption of his powers by the Company, were to be met by an assurance that the intentions of the Government were fixed and irrevocable, and that Lord Dalhousie had been ordered by the Court of Directors, with the approval of the Ministry, of which Lord Canning, the Governor-General elect, was a member, to carry them into execution before leaving India. In case the King referred to the "treaty" of 1837, he was to be informed that that instrument had now no existence, having been annulled by the Court of Directors as soon as it was submitted to them; and that the Governor-General regretted that, owing to inadvertence, the annulment had not been notified to the then King of Oudh, Muhammad Ali Shah. Three days, if required, were to be allowed the King for deliberation.

According to his instructions, General Outram communicated the intentions of the British Government to Nawab Ali Nakki Khan on the 30th of January. The Minister expressed himself much surprised and distressed at the news, deprecated the advance of the troops as unnecessary, and "attempted to contrast the reign of the present King with those of his predecessors, and to point out the manifest reforms which were to be seen on all sides."

The Resident in reply assured him that the advance of the troops was necessary, and the resolve of the Government unalterable.

On the following day, Ali Nakki Khan again waited on General Outram, according to agreement, and after reading the draft treaty and proclamation, "declared that he was authorised dy the King to state that His Majesty was the servant of the British Government, and was, of course, ready to do what was required." He proposed, however, that the King should personally visit Lord Dalhousie, or even go to England, in the hope of obtaining a more favourable decision.

These proposals the Resident met, as before, by a simple assurance that any reconsideration of the merits of the case was out of the question, and asked the Minister to request the King to appoint a day on which he might wait on him with the treaty.

The following day, the 1st of February, the King wrote a piteous letter to the Resident, pleading that he had "never wilfully performed aught that could offend the British Government; on the contrary, for the least of its servants, every step has been taken to please . . . everything has been done to obey whatever instructions may have been received. For instance, after the admonition of Lord Hardinge, the whole country has been placed under a new arrangement, and transferred from the *ijara* to the *amani* system; police stations have everywhere been formed; and the number of culprits who have been punished is manifest." The letter ended with entreaties to the Resident to "intercede most imploringly" with the Governor-General to "put off the adoption of the new policy."

To all this General Outram once more gave the only possible answer. On the same day he visited the Queen-mother, the Janab Aulia Begam, at her own request, at the Zard Kothi palace, in the hope that she, being a sensible woman, would influence the King to accede to the proposed terms. There was a dense crowd in the palace courts as he passed, but the demeanour of the people was, as usual, perfectly courteous. The Queen-mother poured forth supplications in a style similar to that of the King's letter; "entreated the Resident to inform her what His Majesty had done, and why he had incurred the wrath of the British Government"; and begged hard for delay, "during which the King might be enabled to show to the world, by the adoption of vigorous reforms, how anxious and eager he was to obey" the advice of the British Government.

Poor Wajid Ali! Poor Queen-mother! The period of "vigorous reforms," as understood in the Lucknow palace, was passed, and

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not to be recalled by any entreaty.

All attempts to discuss thc question were met by General Outram with the same irresistible *non possum.* He urged on the Begam the risk which the King would run of losing the liberal terms offered him if he refused to accept the proposed treaty, but could elicit no response but protestations.

At last, on the morning of the 4th of February, at the Zard Kothi palace, an interview took place between Wajid Ali and General Outram. The palace courts were almost deserted, the foot guards unarmed, the artillery dismounted, and not a weapon was to be seen among the officials who received the Resident, who was accompanied by his assistants, Captains Hayes and Weston. On the side of the King were present his brother, Sikandar Hashmat, the Minister, Ali Nakki Khan, the Financial Minister, Raja Balkishn, and the Residency Vakil and his Deputy, Mahsi-ud-daulah and Sahib-ud-daulah.

The King had already received through Ali Nakki Khan a copy of Lord Dalhousie's letter. He was now presented with the original, after reading which, he turned to the Resident, and put to him the same question which his mother had asked, "Why have I deserved this? What have I done?" After reading the treaty, the unhappy man "gave vent to his feelings in a passionate burst of grief, and exclaimed :—

" 'Treaties are necessary between equals only : who am I, now, that the British Government should enter into treaties with me? For a hundred years this dynasty has flourished in Oudh. It has ever received the favour, the support, and protection of the British Government. It had ever attempted faithfully and fully to perform its duties to the British Government. The kingdom is a creation of the British, who are able to make and to unmake, to promote and to degrade. It has merely to issue its commands to ensure their fulfilment, not the slightest attempt will be made to oppose the views and wishes of the British Government; myself and subjects are its servants.' "

Taking off his turban and placing it in the hands of the Resident—the utmost token of humility which an Oriental can display—he declared that it was not for him to sign a treaty, that for him there was nothing left but "to seek in Europe for that redress which it was vain to find in India."

Three days later, on the 7th of February, the briefest possible note informed the Resident that the King's resolution not to sign the treaty remained unaltered. Immediately on receipt of this ultimatum, the charge of city and various departments of State was formally assumed; the civil officers who had been appointed to the Oudh Commission were despatched to their several divisions and districts under military escort; and the annexation of Oudh was an accomplished fact. This was the last important event of Lord Dalhousie's administration, and before the end of the month he had given place to Lord Canning.

Two days before this the King had issued a proclamation to all civil and military officials, and to his subjects generally, enjoining them to make no resistance to the British officers who were about to assume the administration; and prohibiting everyone from making any attempt to accompany or follow him when he quitted Lucknow for Calcutta, and Calcutta for England—his intention being to bring his case in person before the Governor-General, and to intercede with the Queen.

General Outram, who from the 7th of February became Chief Commissioner of Oudh, having commented to the Residency Vakil on the latter part of this proclamation, the King wrote to explain that his reason for issuing it was that "ever since his subjects have heard of the new arrangements they have altogether abstained from food, and have never ceased to lament and wail; hence, if immense multitudes of his Majesty's subjects should forsake the country to accompany the King, there would be a great loss to the collection of the revenue ; therefore, the King deemed it necessary to forbid them."

Whether this was a mere flourish, or whether the King really believed that his own departure would be followed by a general exodus of his subjects, it is difficult to say. Probably he, in all good faith, believed himself to be a very estimable monarch. There had always been plenty of people to tell him so, and no one but a Resident, and occasionally a Governor-General, to convey a hint to the contrary. By Lord Hardinge and Colonel Sleeman he had certainly been addressed in as plain and unflattering terms as it often falls to the lot of an Oriental prince to listen to, but the idea does not seem to have ever penetrated his mind that he had duties to perform toward his people, or that the British Government could have any ground for complaint against him so long as its own immediate interests were consulted, and its own requirements

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obeyed. On behalf of his view of the case it may at least be said that it would probably recommend itself to a large majority of Asiatic minds. I remember on one occasion discussing the subject of the annexation of Oudh with a well-to-do zamindar, a man perfectly well affected to English rule, whose father, moreover, had been put to flight, and his esate harried and laid waste by Raghbar Dyal, the infamous Nazim of Gonda-Bahraich, so recently as 1847. "Why," he asked, "had the *Sarkar* deposed Nawab Wajid Ali? He was a poor meek creature, a humble servant and *tabidar*, or follower, of the British. What had he done to be so summarily wiped out?" And it appeared to be quite a new light to him to be told that the misrule and disorder of Oudh had become more than the British Government could tolerate. If this is the point of view of one who was a severe sufferer from the ex-King's administration, and who gained immensely by its subversion, it is to be feared that the judgment of those who suffered and gained less than he will hardly be more favourable. The question of whether the masses of the people of Oudh, in whose interest we believed ourselves to be acting, really desired to be incorporated with the Company's dominions, seems scarcely to have been raised at all in the course of the discussion. The question was certainly one to which, in the nature of things, it would have been hard to find means of furnishing a trustworthy answer. But it seems highly probable that the result of a perfectly honest *plebiscite*, could such by any possibility have been taken, would not have been in favour of the course adopted. That the people were generally grossly misgoverned, and often cruelly oppressed, there can be no doubt. But had they been allowed a choice, it is almost certain that they would have chosen still to bear the ills they knew rather than to be brought under the rigid, irresistible action of bureaucracy of foreigners, whose ways were not as their ways, whose principles and motives were generally beyond their comprehension, and whose laws and regulations, though not intentionally unjust, appeared to be hemmed in by every species of pitfall and mantrap, from which a plain man, however innocent and well-meaning, could hardly hope to escape.

However, if our policy in India is not to be determined by the soundest judgments we can ourselves form, rather than by the unenlightened notions of the masses of our native fellow citizens, we have no *raison d'etre* in the country. The set of native opinion must always be one of the main elements to be considered in all problems of Indian politics, yet is should not be so far the paramount consideration as to be allowed to over-ride the distinct behests of a higher law where such can be discerned. And the question of the annexation of Oudh seems to be a case in point. It is difficult to rise from a study of the Blue Book of 1856, without feeling that the motives which led to the adoption of that measure were not mere vulgar lust of conquest, or mere greed of pecuniary gain. There can be no doubt that Lord Dalhousie, and the Members of his Council, and General Outram, were, one and all, firmly convinced that by assuming the administration of Oudh, they were acting in the interests of humanity, and conferring a great blessing on several millions of people. And they were certainly right in their belief that the misrule and oppression prevailing in the province were intense. Their confidence, or at least the confidence of Lord Dalhousie, in the positive excellence of English methods, and in the beneficent effects of English rule on the populations subject to it, was, no less certainly, exaggerated. But, having that confidence, they would surely have been neglecting their duty had they omitted to act on it when they had the power, or allowed regard for the feelings of a King like Wajid Ali Shah to outweigh what they believed to be the welfare of millions. The true test by which the policy of the annexation of Oudh must be judged is, whether the people were, to a considerable degree, more likely to prosper, and to rise in the scale of civilisation, under British than under any practically attainable form of native rule. Whether they actually have thus risen and prospered, is a question of fact, on which there may be, and are, differences of opinion. But if the then Government of India firmly and honestly believed, as it unquestionably did, that the only effective means of securing a tolerable government to the people of Oudh was to assume the administration of the province, then were they more than justified in assuming it.

Human motives are seldom wholly unmixed, and it may perhaps, without uncharitableness, be doubted whether the reluctance to interfere would not have been greater than it was, had Oudh been a country from which no surplus revenue could be derived. It may be regretted that Colonel Sleeman's advice was not followed, and taxation reduced to the level of expenditure within the province. In a letter to Sir James Hogge, dated from

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Lucknow, on the 28th of October, 1852, he wrote as follows :—

"Were we to take advantage of the occasion to *annex* or *confiscate* Oudh, or any part of it, our good name in India would inevitably suffer; and that good name is more valuable to us than a dozen of Oudhs. We are now looked up to throughout India as the only impartial arbitrators that the people generally have ever had... and from the time we cease to be so looked up to, we must begin to sink. We suffered from our conduct in Sindh; but that was a country distant and little known, and linked to the rest of India by few ties of sympathy. Our conduct towards it was preceded by wars and convulsions around, and in its annexation there was nothing manifestly deliberate. It will be otherwise with Oudh. Here the giant's strength is manifest, and we cannot 'use it like a giant' without suffering in the estimation of all India. Annexation or confiscation are not compatible with our relations with this little dependent state. We must show ourselves to be high-minded, and above taking advantage of its prostrate weakness, by appropriating its revenues exclusively to the benefit of the people and royal family of Oudh. We should soon make it the finest garden in India, with the people happy, prosperous, and attached to our rule."

The course of our relations with Oudh was not destined to follow the path here sketched out for it, and the garden of India has, for good or evil, become a part, and perhaps the most heavily taxed part, of the British Indian Empire. All wishes that it had been otherwise, and speculations as to what might have been, are now fruitless; and any scheme for reversing the current of events must be regarded much as would be a proposal to restore the Heptarchy, and relegated to the region of "lunar politics." But this much, at least, may be fairly asserted, that the province from which we have taken so much, and to which we have hitherto given so little, has a historic claim to exceptionally liberal treatment; and that, should it ever come to be generally acknowledged that only by a considerable pecuniary sacrifice can she be raised from her present poverty-stricken condition, that sacrifice ought not to be refused.

Note—It was not until this chapter was in type that I had the advantage of seeing Major Evans Bell's "Retrospects and Prospects of Indian Policy." The article on "Oudh" in that work appears to demonstrate that the treaty of 1837 had never been abrogated as a whole; that its provisions for administration by British officers on behalf of the King still held good and should have been acted on; and that reform, without annexation, was practicable and should have been aimed at.

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